2

THE RETVRNE OF PRAYERS.

A TREATISE: wherein this Case [*How to discerne Gods answers to our prayers*] is briefly resolved.

With other observations upon *Psal.* 85. 8 concerning GOD *speaking* PEACE, &c.

By THO: GOODVVIN. *B. D.*

HAB. 2. 1.
I will watch to see what hee will say to mee.

LONDON,
Printed by *R. B.* for *R. Dawlman*, and *L. Fawne*, at the signe of the Brazen Serpent in *Pauls* Church-yard. 1636.

THE
RETURN
OF
PRAYERS.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE MVCH HONOVRED KNIGHT, SIR NATHANIEL RICH.

SIR,

GOD, *who from all eternity hath had an infinite Masse of grace and glory lying by him, to bestow upon his Church: and did accordingly provide a treasury and Magazin sufficient wherein to store up all,* [the Bosome of his Sonne:] *in whom are* hid, riches *so* unsearcheable, *as cannot be told over, much lesse spent to all eternitie;* Ephes. 3.8.

He hath as richly shed his holy Spirit on us: that πλουσίως. Tit 3.6. wee, who *could never have* knowne *of any thing bequeathed us, nor* what to pray for as we ought, *might both, fully from him* know all that God hath given us, *and through him lay claime thereto,* who maketh intercession for us; *and so doth furnish us with a privie Key to all that Treasury, which otherwise is fast shut up to all the world.*

Through which Spirit of prayer, *and* supplications *thus* powred forth, *beleevers come to bee at once* anointed

ted to the fellowship, *and execution of those three glorious Offices of* Christ *their head. Not onely* 1. *of* Priests; *by* offering up *their prayers*, as spirituall sacrifices acceptable to God, through Iesus Christ: *but* 2 *of* Kings; to rule with God, *Hos.* 11.12. *Being hereby made of Privy Councell to the King of kings*, so as their
Psal. 20.4,5. Councels, *and desires expresst in* their Petitions, *are said to* be fulfilled; *and* their decrees *in their* Prayers made, *ratified, and* establisht. *Nay further, by vertue of this priviledge, advanced to such height of favour,*
Iob 22.27,28. Hos. 12.3,4. *as* by their strength *in prayer alone*, to have power with God *himselfe; and not onely with him, but also* over him, *and* in their wrestlings to prevaile: *Yea to command: Himselfe hath said it*; Thus saith the Lord, the holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ASKE of me, of things to come, concerning my sonnes, and concerning the worke of my hands COMMAND yee ME, *Isa.* 45. 11. *which so transcendent priviledge of power, is likewise by the expresse words of this great Charter, universally extended unto all transactions of this lower part of his dominions; whether Ecclesiasticall, which doe* concerne his sonnes, *that is, his Church: or whatever other, the more ordinary* workes of his hands, *that appertaine to common providence.*

Mat 6.10. *And for as much as these grand affaires of this his* Kingdome, *as future, and* to come, *are commended to their prayers, as their most proper subject, about which they are to treate*, Aske of me of things to come: *in this respect, they doe become as truly* 3. Prophets *also: though not in so full and compleat, yet in some kind of true resemblance; not by* foretelling, *yet by* forespeaking *in their prayers, things that come to passe. To demonstrate which, God, who made and upholds this world, and all things in*

is by the word of his power, doth likewise rule & governe it by the Presidents, and prescripts rules, of the word of his will; exactly dispensing unto men both rewards and punishments, according to the tenour of some or other of his promises and threatnings, and former like proceedings therein recorded; though with such various liberty, in respect of the particulars, that his wayes remaine unsearchable and past finding out. That looke how he appointed in the heavens, those ordinances of the Sunne, Moone, and Starres, by their light, heate, and motion, to rule the day and night, to divide, and cause the severall seasons of the geare, and all the changes and alterations that doe passe over this animall, and naturall world: in like maner hath he stretched out that so exceeding broad expanse of his word and law, (to which the Psalmist doth assimulate it) over this rationall world of Angels and men; and therein set his Statutes, and his Iudgements, that by the light of Precepts, and their influences in rewards and punishments, they might order and direct these his creatures reasonable, and all their actions; also dispose, and set out all the issues of them. And seeing his Saints they are a people in whose hearts is his Law, and their delight is to meditate therein both day and night, they daily calculating and observing the various aspects, conjunctions, and mixt influences of these innumerable precepts, promises, and threatnings, which themselves and others, Nations or Men, stand under; and by a Iudgement thence resulting, so farre as they have attained, endeavouring to frame their supplications and petitions according to Gods will. Hence their prayers oft full happily succeed, & aforehand do accord to those issues and events that afterwards fall out. That like as it sometimes falls out, that the earth comes to be just under the Sun

Psal. 25. 12.

Psal. 119. 96.

Psal. 19. 2, 3, 4. compared with Rom. 10. 18.

Ier. 8. 7.

ted to the fellowship, *and execution of those three glorious Offices of* Christ *their head. Not onely* 1. *of* Priests; *by* offering up *their prayers*, as spirituall sacrifices acceptable to God, through Iesus Christ: *but* 2 *of* Kings; to rule with God, *Hos.* 11.12. *Being hereby made of Privy Councell to the King of kings, so as* their
Psal. 20.4,5. Councels, *and desires expresst in* their Petitions, *are said to* be fulfilled; *and* their decrees *in their* Prayers made, *ratified, and* establisht. *Nay further, by vertue of this priviledge, advanced to such height of favour,*
Iob 22.27,28. *as* by their strength *in prayer alone*, to have power
Hos. 12.3,4. with God *himselfe*; *and not onely with him, but also* over him, *and* in their wrestlings to prevaile: *Yea to command: Himselfe hath said it*; Thus saith the Lord, the holy One of Israel, and his Maker, ASKE of me, of things to come, concerning my sonnes, and concerning the worke of my hands COMMAND yee ME, *Is* 45. 11. *which so transcendent priviledge of power, is likewise by the expresse words of this great Charter, universally extended unto all transactions of this lower part of his dominions; whether Ecclesiasticall, which doe* concerne his sonnes, *that is, his Church: or what ever other, the more ordinary* workes of his hands, *that appertaine to common providence.*

And for as much as these grand affaires of this his
Mat 6.10. Kingdome, *as future, and* to come, *are commended to their prayers, as their most proper subject, about which they are to treate*, Aske of me of things to come: *in this respect, they doe become as truly* 3. Prophets *also: though not in so full and compleat, yet in some kind of true resemblance*; *not by* foretelling, *yet by* forespeaking *in their prayers, things that come to passe. To demonstrate which, God, who made and upholds this world, and all things in*

it,

it, by the word of his power, doth likewise rule & governe it, by the Presidents, and prescript rules, of the word of his will: exactly dispensing unto men, both rewards and punishments, according to the tenour of some or other, of his promises and threatnings, and former like proceedings therein recorded: though with such various liberty, in respect of the particulars, that his wayes remaine unsearchable and past finding out: That looke how he appointed in the heavens, those ordinances of the Sunne, Moone, and Starres, by their light, heate, and motion, to rule the day and night, to divide, and cause the severall seasons of the yeare, and all the changes and alterations that doe passe over this animall, and naturall world: in like maner hath he stretched out that so exceeding broad expanse of his word and law, (to which the Psalmist doth assimulate it) over this rationall world, of Angels and men; and therein set his Statutes, and his Iudgements, that by the light of Precepts, and their influences in rewards and punishments, they might order and direct these his creatures reasonable, and all their actions; also dispose, and set out all the issues of them. And seeing his Saints they are a people in whose hearts is his Law; and their delight is to meditate therein both day and night, they daily calculating and observing the various aspects, conjunctions, and mixt influences of those innumerable precepts, promises, and threatnings, which themselves and others, Nations or Men, stand under; and by a Iudgement thence resulting, so farre as they have attained, endeavouring to frame their supplications and petitions according to Gods will: Hence their prayers oft full happily succeed, & aforehand do accord to those issues and events that afterwards fall out. That like as it sometimes fals out, that the earth comes to be just under the Sun

Psal. 25. 10.

Psal. 119 96.

Psal. 19. 2, 3, 4. compared with Rom. 10. 18.

Ier. 8. 7.

and Moone, in some of their conjunctions; so their desires and prayers, sometimes in a direct line fall under, and subordinately concurre with Gods secret purposes, and some revealed promise met in conjunction, to produce such and such effects. The Spirit *also, herein* helping their infirmities, *sometime so guiding and directing them, by a gratious preinstinct, though unbeknowne to them, to pitch their requests upon such particulars, as God hath fully purposed to bring to passe; becomming thereby, as it were, the Spirit of prophecie unto them, respectively, in some measure and degree.*

Thus doth that great King imploy his neareſt servants, as his under Officers, and Sheriſes to serve his Writs and executions upon his Enemies; to execute the Iudgement written *in his threatnings.* Psalm. 149.9. *and to accompliſh his mercies written also, by putting all the promises in suite; to be as man-midwives (as* Hezekiahs *allusion, when hee sent a visiting to the Prophet* Esay, *for his voyce and suffrage, seemeth to import) to help and assist his promises and* decrees *in their travell with mercies and deliverance, when these* their Children doe come unto the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth.

Esay 37.2,3,4
Zeph.2.2.

In all which they shall therefore have the honour to be accounted Co-workers together with God, in his greateſt workes of wonder. And at the latter day, when that great and laſt Edition, both of all Gods works, and likewise ours, then compleate and finished, shall bee publiſhed to all the world, they shall finde their names put to them, together with his owne; and the same by him acknowledged, to bee as truly the workes of their hearts and prayers, as that they are the sole worke of his hands and power. Such honour have all his Saints.

And

And if all the works of GOD *are ſo* exceeding great, and his thoughts *therein ſo* very deepe, *Pſal.* 92. 5. *that everie Iota of them, doth deſerve our deepeſt ſtudies, and intentions; and thereunto require a proper skill and* wiſedome, *to read his hand, peculiar unto the Saints, verſ.* 6. *whereunto muſt bee adjoyned the moſt* diligent ſearch, Pſal. 77. 6. *and attentive obſervation to finde out his meaning in them; and withall a ſpeciall inclination, and* delight *to be converſant therein,* Thy workes are very great, ſought out of thoſe that have pleaſure in them, *Pſal.* 111. 2. *And if, of all the reſt, thoſe choicer pieces, his workes of mercy may challenge our beſt regard, in which his heart and* delights are moſt; *on which his wiſedome hath laid* Mic. 7. 18. *on the richeſt workmanſhip, in the moſt curious contrivements of his love: Then ſurely that ſelected volumne of more ſpeciall mercies* [His Epiſtles:] *vouchſafed in anſwer to our prayers, is above all other, moſt exactly to be ſtudied, and moſt diligently to be peruſed by us. Wherein* God *doth unboſome himſelfe, and lay open his heart, more ſweetly, more familiarly unto us; which are directed, and in a manner dedicated more particularly unto our ſelves alone; Many of them written with his owne hand, in a more immediate manner diſcouered and appearing in them: and all of them come ſealed with the impreſſe of everlaſting love, and downe laden with the encloſure of the moſt precious tokens of his ſpeciall favour,* Who ſo is wiſe will obſerve theſe things; and they Pſal. 107. 43. ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſſe of the Lord.

Neither have ſuch favours, onely more of mercy in the things themſelves beſtowed, but are further indeared to us, by being made our owne mercies, *by a more peculiar title to them, by which the kindneſſe in them is rendred double. For therein we haue that royall libertie to become*

our

our owne choosers, and contrivers of our owne condition, having all the promises throwne downe to us, with blanks for us to write our names in wch *of them we please; which is the greatest liberty: And We have withall his* Spirit *secretly directing, and fixing the needle of our desires, to the same point, wherein his great intentions towards us doe meet with our best good: which is indeed the truest liberty. And to be made our selves, whom we love so well, and therefore delight to doe good unto, the chiefest instruments under him of our own greatest happines, is a priviledge then* wch *the creature is not made capable of a more transcendent royaltie. And yet when the greatest love, thus rectified, which possibly we can bear our selves,* hath opened its mouth widest, *and stretched our desires in praying to their utmost compasse; then will* Gods *infinite vast love, not onely* fill *them, but* doe for us above all that we are able to aske, *yea* to thinke; exceeding abundantly above all; *as* far *above, as* his thoughts are above our thoughts; *which is* farre *more* than the heavens are higher than the earth.

All which, when put together, (if well considered,) how would it provoke us to call in all that precious stock of our time, thoughts, and intentions which we cast away on trifles, to lay out the choicest portion of them in this thriving trade of entercourse with God; the returnes *whereof,* are better than the merchandise of silver, and the gaine thereof, than fine gold. *It is the praying Christian that alone imployes the riches of the promises, which wee usually let lie by us like dead stocke unimproved: whilst he like a* wise *and diligent* Merchant, *lookes abroad upon all the affaires of Iesus Christ, that are afloate here in this world, and adventures in them all; is watchfull to spie out all advantages, and with an holy* [illegible] *intermedleth*

medleth in every businesse *that may bring in glory unto God, good unto the Church, grace and comfort to his owne soule. And how infinitely rich must that man needs become, that puts even Gods riches out to use, with the* increase *of* ten Talents for one, *yea* an hundred fold!

The due estimate whereof, would no lesse quicken us to as diligent an inquiry, what becomes of all those goodly adventures, the prayers we make; to listen what haven they arive at, how, and when, and with what fraught they doe returne.

In which great duty, and most necessarie propertie of all true Merchants, yet many of the best and greatest dealers, that are diligent enough in praying, are still found failing and deficient; that omit no gainfull opportunitie of adventure, but are careless and unobservant of their returnes.

Some *through ignorance (it may be) that this is at all a duty, or of anie such importance, are carefull onely how to lade in prayers enough, not expecting to finde any* of this bread cast upon the waters, *untill that great and generall* returne *of themselves, and all the world,* with joy bringing their sheaves with them. Others, *though at present, many of their prayers come home* after a few dayes, *and richly laden, yet through want of skill to reade those Bills of Exchange which God often writes in an obscurer character, they lie unregarded by them.* Many *when voyages prove long, (though to their greater advantage, when once they doe returne, yet in the meane time) through discouragement, they give all for lost, as we doe ships at Sea we cannot heare of. The* most *are comonlie complaining, that their adventures still miscarrie, and that little or nothing comes of all their praiers.*

And All are negligent of keeping their books of accounts, to cast up their commings in, and goings out, the one with the other. By which they lose the chiefest portion of comfort which for the present, God hath here allotted us to live upon [the revenues of their prayers.] And God also, is not onely robbed of that Custome of his glory which should thence accrew; but wronged also by standing still as debtor in their accounts to many prayers, in the returne of which he hath beene creditor long agoe.

I have endeavoured therefore in this small Treatise to convince beleevers of the grand importance of this duty, which is so full of gaine: To discover likewise the causes of the neglect herein, and remove the temptations and discouragements which doe occasion it; and have briefly resolved such cases as doe more usually occurre in the practice of it. But principally, my desire was to give in some few experiments, and observations, which may helpe to teach the weaker sort, though not perfectly to reade, yet here and there to spell, (and especially out of the impressions in their owne hearts) Gods meaning towards them in his answers. I have cast in some scattered calculations of some broken prayers cast up, which though they will not amount, to make generall and perfect Tables out of, yet may serve, as Instances and examples, for young beginners, to direct them in the exercise of this most usefull skill, and wisedome, how to compute and ballance their accounts by comparing their prayers, and their returnes together.

This small and imperfect embryon, I have presumed to send forth into the world; and directed it first of all to present its service unto you; and make an honourable and thankfull mention of your Name. Your worth deserves a more costly, large, and lasting monument for this in-

scription.

scription. Your *owne abilities of learning, eloquence, and depth of wisdome in humane affaires, would* you *be perswaded to lay them out, as* you *are able, would erect such a remembrance and sumptuous memoriall of* you, *when* you *are gathered to* your *fathers, as would beare some proportion to your great worth. But that which emboldned me was, the neare affinity which meditations of this nature doe hold, with those other* your *more retired thoughts* you *thinke to none but* God *and your owne soule.* You *have beene long a frequent and constant dealer in this blessed way of entercourse with God in private: Those that know* you, *know* your *strict observance of those exchange houres* you *have devoted to meete with* God, *and enjoy communion with* Him. *But above all, it was that personall obligation, under which a great and speciall favour from* you *long since brought mee, upon which I devoted (with my selfe) the first of my labours unto* your *service. And it became one great reliefe unto my thoughts, weighing the manie inconveniences of appearing thus in publique, that it gave so full occasion to pay my vowes thus openly before all the world; which having now done,* God that is rich in mercy to all that call upon him, *fill* you *with all Grace, and grant all your petitions; so prayes*

Your Worships obliged

to love and serve *you,*

Your Worships obliged

to love and serve you,

THE TABLE.

CHAP. 1, *The maine Observation: That Gods people are diligently to observe the answers of their prayers* Pag. 3.
The sinfulnesse of the neglect hereof demonstrated by seven reasons 3
1 *Reas.* An ordinance of God taken in vaine 4
2 *Reas.* Gods attributes taken in vaine. 5
3 *Reas.* God in answering made to speake in vaine 6
4 *Reas.* God provoked not to answer 8
5 *Reas.* We shall not returne thankes 8
6 *Reas.* We shall lose much experience 9
1. Of Gods faithfulnesse 9
2. Of our owne wayes towards him *ibid.*
7 *Reas.* We shall lose much comfort 10

CHAP. 2. *Three Cases: The first concerning prayers for such promises as may be accomplished in ages to come* 12
1 *Sect.* Such prayers the Church to come doth reape 13
2 *Sect.* Yet we at present may have an answer about them 14
3 *Sect.* In heaven, and at the last day we shall rejoyce for their accomplishment 15

CHAP. 3. *Second Case: Concerning prayers made for others of our friends, &c. How answered* 16
1 *Sect.* Such prayers oft granted 16
2 *Sect.* Yet not alwayes in the very thing prayed for 17
Such promises but indefinite 18
As all temporall promises are 19
Our faith towards them not required to be assurance 19
Vnlesse God give a speciall faith 21
3 *Sect.* Such prayers returned into our owne bosomes 22
4 *Sect.* God in the end casts some out of our prayers 24
5 *Sect.* Those prayers answered in some others 25

CHAP. 4 *Third Case: How the influence of our owne prayers, when others pray also for the same thing with us, may be discerned* 26
1 *Sect.* If our hearts are affected with the same holy affection 27
Vnbeknowne each to other *ibid.*
2 *Sect.* By some speciall endeavour: as, 28
1 Some notable circumstance 28
2 By joy in the accomplishment 29
3 By thankfulnesse for the accomplishment 30
3 *Sect.* This lesse to bee doubted when the thing prayed for by us doth concerne our owne particular 30

CHAP. 5 *Common directions helpfull in all cases, and prayers: taken first from observations from* Before *and* In *praying* 31
1 *Sect.* BEFORE: when God prepares the heart 31
Difference betweene Satans motions to prayer, and Gods 32
2 *Sect.* IN prayer: Gods *speakings* in prayer are evidences of hearing: and discerned by 4 things 34
1 Giving a quietnesse by prayer about the thing prayed for 34
3 *Sect.* 2 By revealing his love, in and upon such petitions 36
A caution herein 37
Reasons why God drawes nigh when hee grants not the thing 38
4 Sect. 3 God sometimes gives a particular assurance 39
A Caution herein 40
5 *Sect.* 4 By giving a restlesse importunity to pray for a particular mercy 42
CHAP. 6 *Observations made upon the dispositions of the heart AFTER prayer: Untill the ISSUE of the thing prayed for* 42
1 *Sect.* When God gives an obedient dependant heart 43
2 *Sect.* When God gives an heart *waiting* for and expecting it 44
CHAP. 7 *Observations made AFTER prayer* Vpon *the ISSVE: first* If accomplisht: *whether as the fruit of prayer, or of common providence* 45
1 *Sect.* God sometimes answers the prayer in the very thing and manner desired 46
2 *Sect.* Directions to discerne that things thus obtained are in answer to prayers 48
1 From *the manner of Gods performance.* A more than ordinary hand discovered in things accomplisht by prayer, instanced in 5 particulars 48

1 By bringing it to passe through difficulties 49
2 By facilitating all meanes 50
3 Effecting it suddenly 50
4 With addition of other mercies above what was desired 51
5 By some speciall circumstance as a token of his hand in it 51
3 *Sect.* 2 From the *Time* wherein it is accomplisht 52
As when we were most instant in prayer 53
2 In the fittest time for us. Then, 54
1 When we have most need 54
2 When the heart was best prepared to receive it 55
4 *Sect.* 3 From the proportion which may bee observed betwixt Gods dealings in the accomplishment, and our prayers 57
CHAP. 8 Seven observations *more, from the* Effects, *which the accomplishment of the mercy hath upon the heart* 59
1 *Sect.* If it draw the heart nearer to God *ibid.*
2 *Sect.* Enlargeth the heart with thankfulnesse 60
3 *Sect.* Encourageth the heart the more to pray for other things 61
4 *Sect.* If it makes more carefull to performe the vowes made to obtaine it 61
5 *Sect.* If by faith a man sees and acknowledgeth Gods sole hand in the accomplishment 63
6 *Sect.* By an assurance which comes sometimes with the mercy 64
7 *Sect. By the event:* Things obtained by prayer prove stable mercies 65
CHAP. 9. *Considerations, to quiet us, and to helpe to discerne an acceptation of the prayer, when the thing is* Not accomplisht 66
1 *Sect.* The thing not alwayes granted, when yet the prayer is heard 66
An objection answered 67
2 *Sect.* Some blessings not absolutely promised, nor absolutely to bee prayed for 68
In which a deniall is to be enterpreted as best for us in Gods judgement 68
3 *Sect.* There may be a reservation in the deniall, for some great mercy 69
4 *Sect.* There may be a transmutation into some other blessing of the same kinde 70
5 *Sect.* God when he denies, yet answereth to the ground of our prayers 71

6 *Sect.* And yeelds farre in it, to give satisfaction to his child 73
7 *Sect.* We may know, that the prayer notwithstanding is accepted, by the effects upon the heart, which are 4. 74
1 If we acknowledge God righteous in the deniall 74
2 If God fils the heart with contentment in the deniall 75
3 If the heart be thankfull out of faith 75
4 If not discouraged, but prayes still 76

CHAP. 10. Application: *A* reproofe *of them that pray, but looke not after the* Returnes *of their prayers: The* causes *of this neglect: are* 77
1 Temptations: 1 From want of assurance that our persons are accepted 78
2 From the weakenesse of our prayers: three answers to it 79
3 From not obtaining what we formerly prayed for, answered by 4. things, 82
2 More sinfull discouragements, as, 83
1 From slothfulnesse in praying 83
2 Looking at prayer as a duty onely, and not as a meanes to obtaine 85
3 Falling into sinne after prayers 86

Sixe Observations more out of the Text.
1 *Obser.* That God doth sometimes not speake peace to his owne people 92
2 *Obser.* The cause thereof some folly. 93
3 *Obser.* God onely can speake peace 96
4 *Obser.* God easily can give peace 99
5 *Obser.* God will certainly speake to his people 103
6 *Obser.* After peace spoken his people should returne no more to folly 107
The sin and folly of relapsing shewne by seven reasons. 121
Temptations from relapse into the same sinne after peace spoken, answered
By Scriptures 128
By 3 Examples 130
By 4 Reasons 134
5 Cautions 141

FINIS.

THE RETVRNE OF PRAYERS:

PSALME 85. 8.

I will heare what God the Lord will speake: for He will speake peace unto His people, and to His Saints: but let them not turne againe to folly.

The Coherence of the words:

THis *Psalme* was penned, in the name and for the comfort of the whole Church of the *Iewes*, both as a Prophecie of, and as a Prayer for their return out of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity, and the having in againe of that ancient glory, peace, adminiſtration of Iuſtice, liberty of GODS Ordinances,

plenty and increaſe, which formerly they enjoyed, but had now ſuffered an ebbe of ſeventy yeers continuance in that Captivity. And firſt he beginneth with Prayer, from the firſt *verſe* to this we have in hand, putting the Lord in mind of, and urging Him with His gratious dealings in former times unto His Church: this is not the firſt time, ſaith He, that the Church hath beene in Captivity, and that thou haſt returned it as out of *Ægypt*, &c. and therefore we hope that thou wilt do ſo againe; *Thou haſt been favourable unto thy Land*, &c. His Prayer being finiſhed, and he having ſpoke, hee now ſtands, and liſtens, as you uſe to do when you expect an Eccho, what Eccho he ſhould have, what anſwer would be returned from Heaven, whither his Prayer had already come. *I will heare what the Lord will ſpeake*, or as ſome reade it, *I heare what the Lord doth ſpeake*: for ſometimes there is a preſent Eccho, a ſpeedy anſwer returned to a mans heart, even ere the Prayer is halfe finiſhed, as unto *Daniel*, *Dan.* 9. 20, 21. And in briefe it is this, *The Lord will ſpeake peace unto His people*: he finds this anſwer writ at the bottom of the petition, but with this clauſe of admonition for time to come, added; *But let them not returne againe to folly*: a good uſe to be made of ſo gracious an anſwer.

CHAP.

Chap. I.

The maine observation and subject of this discourse thence declared: That Gods people are diilgently to observe the answers to Prayers: The reasons.

THese words being especially spoken in relation to God returning answer to his Prayer made, therefore in that relation I meane principally to handle them.

The point is this; *That when a man hath put up Prayers to God*, he is to rest *assured, that God will in mercy answer his Prayers*, and *to listen diligently, and observe how his Prayers are answered:* both are heere to be observed.

I will listen to heare what He will speak, that is, how Hee will accompliſh them; and withall hee confidently expreſſeth an aſſurance, that *God will speake peace*; thus doth the Church, *Mic.* 7. 7, 8. *I will looke to the Lord, my God will heare me:* She was both ſure of gracious audience with Him: *my God will heare me:* and ſhee will waite till hee doth it, and obſerve how he doth it; *I will looke to the Lord, ver.* 9. *I will beare the indignation of the Lord, till hee plead my cauſe.* So *Habakkuk*, he having made a Prayer againſt the Tyranny of *Nebuchadnezzar*, in the firſt Chapter, having ended it, hee begins the ſecond Chapter thus; *I will ſtand upon my watch-tower, and ſee what he will anſwer me*, and in the end an anſwer comes *ver.* 2. and thus as hee waited for a Viſion (for ſometime their prophecies were in anſwer to

The ſinfulnes of the neglect herof demonſtrated by ſeven reaſons.

CHAP. I.

prayers) ſo ſhould wee for an anſwer.

Reaſon 1. Hereby an Ordinance of God is taken in vaine: which is Gods Name.

1 Reaſon, becauſe otherwiſe you take an Ordinance of God in vaine in your hearts, which is to take *Gods Name* (with whom in that Ordinance you deale) *in vaine*: for it is a ſigne you thinke your prayer not an effectuall meanes to attaine the end, and ſay ſecretly in your harts, as they in *Iob* 21.15. *What profit have we, if we pray to him*; for if wee uſe any meanes, and expect not the end, it is a ſigne we thinke the meanes vaine to accompliſh that end, whereas there is never a faithfull prayer, but is ordained of God to be a meanes to obtaine what wee deſire and pray for, and is not put up in vaine, but ſhall have an anſwer, 1 *Ioh.* 5. 14. 15. *This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we aske any thing according to His will He heareth us*, tis true God heareth an enemy, but to *heare with favour*, is the *hearing* there meant ſo uſed in our ordinary ſpeech, as wee ſay of a favourite that he hath the Kings eare, and ſo if a man be *obſtinate* to a mans *counſell*, we ſay *hee would not heare*, though he give the hearing, ſo here to heare is a word of gratious inclination to do the thing required, and thus Gods eares are ſaid to be open to your prayers, ſo it followes, that *if he heareth us, whatſoever we aske, wee know that wee have the petitions that we deſired of Him.* Aſſoone as we have prayed, we are ſaid *to have our petitions*, that is, they are then granted, and we may be confident they are aſſented unto by *God*, although in regard of outward diſpenſation the command for accompliſhment is not yet come forth, even as a petitioner is ſaid to *have his ſuite* when the *word of the King is gone forth*, that it ſhall be done though it paſſeth not the

ſeale

ſeale or bee ſigned a good while after, and like as when a wicked man ſinneth, aſſoone as the act is committed, ſo ſoone *doth ſentence* from God goe forth againſt the ſinner, but the *Execution* overtakes him not (it may be) a good while after, according to that of *Salomon*, *ſentence againſt an evill doer is not preſently executed*; it is *preſently ſentenced*, as the words imply, but not *executed*; ſo in like manner falleth it out in a godly mans prayers, that as ſoone as the prayer arrives in Heaven (which is in an inſtant) ſo ſoone is the petition granted, (So *Dan. 9. at the beginning* of his prayer the *Command came forth ver.* 23. though the *Angell* who brought the anſwer, arrived not at him till towards the end in the Evening, *ver.* 21.) but the reall accompliſhment of it is deferred. So as no prayer in reſpect of an anſwer to it is in vaine; but where God hath given a heart to ſpeake, Hee hath an eare to heare; which not to regard is to take an ordinance in vaine, which is *Gods* name. *Eccleſ.* 7. 11.

Reaſon 2. Wee take the Attributes of God in vaine.

And ſecondly, not ſimply *Gods name*, as in an Ordinance made known, but alſo His name, that is, His Attributes are taken in vaine, for it is a ſigne you thinke of that God you pray to, that either *his eare is heavy, that he cannot heare, or His hand ſhortned, that He cannot ſave, or His heart ſtreightned, and His bowels reſtrained, that He will not*, and thus alſo you rob him and deſpoile him of one of his moſt royall Titles, whereby He ſtiles Himſelfe, a *God that heareth prayers*, and is ſo regardfull of them, that in the firſt of *Kings* 8. 59. they are ſaid to be *nigh the Lord day and night*, they are all before him, and he ſets them in his view, as we doe letters of friends which wee *Pſal.* 65. 2.

CHAP. I.

ſticke in our windowes, that we may remember to anſwer them, or lay them not out of our boſomes, that we might not forget them; ſo the petitions of His people, paſſe not out of His ſight, til He ſends an *anſwer*, which is called *ſpeaking* here, *God ſpeaking* as well in His *workes* as in His *word*. But you hereby make an Idoll God of Him, ſuch as were the *vanities of the heathen*, as if Hee *had eares and heard not, eyes and ſawe not your need*, &c. Such a *God* as *Elias* mockt, *you muſt ſpeake aloud, he may bee in a journey*, &c. Such a *God* doe you make the *God of Heaven, and earth* to bee, whil'ſt you put no more confidence in Him or make no more reckoning of your *prayers* to Him then the *heathens* did of their *ſacrifices* to their *Gods*. Petitioners doe not onely put up their requeſts, but uſe to waite at great mens dores and enquire and liſten what anſwer is given to them, and it is part of an *honour* to great men that we doe ſo: and for that end alſo are wee to *wait on God*, to ſhew His *greatneſſe* and our *diſtance* from Him and *dependance* upon Him; as *the eyes of the ſervants looke to the hand of their Maſters, ſo doe we*, ſaith *David*, *on thee, till thou haſt mercy on us*. And *Pſal.* 130. after he had prayed *verſe* 2. He ſayes, he *waited more then they that watch for the morning*, like thoſe that having ſome great buſines to do, long for the day light, and look often out to ſpy the day, ſo he for a glimmering & dawning of an anſwer, as alſo *Pſal.* 5. 3. *In the Morning will I direct my prayer to thee: and looke:* that is, *for an anſwer*: Againe, if God doth give you an anſwer, yet if you mind it not, you let God ſpeake to you in vaine, if you doe not liſten to what He anſwers; if

Pſal. 123. 2.

Reaſon 3. If God give an anſwer wee make Him ſpeak in vaine.

two

two men walke together, and the one when himself hath said, and spoke what he would, listens not, but is regardlesse of what the other answers, he exceedingly slights the man; As *non respondere pro convitio est*, not to answer againe is contempt, so *non attendere*, not to attend to what one sayes. Now our *speaking* to GOD *by prayers*, and his *speaking* to us by *answers* thereunto, is one great part of our *walking with God*, to study out His dealings with us, to compare our prayers and His answers, which are as *Dialogues* betweene us and Him. It is said of *Samuels prophecy: that not a word of it fell to the ground:* and so it may be said of our prayers; and so it ought to bee of *Gods answers, not a word should fall to the ground*, as it doth, if you by your observation, and listning to it catch it not, apprehend and observe it not, (as *Benhadads* servants did *Ahabs* words;) and by the same reason that you are to observe the fulfilling of *Gods* promises, you are of your prayers also; now, 1 *King*. 8. 56. it is said, *not one word failed of al he promised. Salomon* had observed this by a particular survay and register taken of all that *God* had spoken and done for them, and found it so, and there is the like reason of answers to prayers, for *prayers are but putting promises into suite*, and therefore *Salomon* brings those words in there, to this very purpose, to confirme their faiths in this, that no prayers made (which was his scope in that speech,) would faile being grounded on a promise, to encourage others and His owne heart, and therefore *verse 59.* he inferres upon it; *Let my words be nigh thee, &c.* Seeing thou alwayes thus performest thy good word unto thy people.

CHAP. I.

1 Sam. 3. 19.

CHAP. I.

4. Yea, you will provoke the *Lord* not to answer at all, he will forbeare to answer, because it will be in vaine. When a man is talking to one that listens not to him, he will cease to answer, and leave off speaking; and so doth *God*. So that which the *Apostle* saith of *faith*, that it is *not enough to beleeve, but when you have beleeved, you have need of patience* to eke out faith, that *you may inherit the promises*, may be also said, and so it is in praying: it is not enough to pray; but after you have prayed, you have need to listen for an answer, that you may receive your prayers, *God* will not grant them else. As he said, *the Sermon was not yet done*, when yet the Preacher had done; because it is not done, till practised; so our prayers are not heard, when yet made, but you must waite for and attend the accomplishment. 5. If you observe not his answers, how shall you blesse *God*, and thanke him for hearing your prayers? *Psal.* 116. 1,2. *I love the Lord, because hee hath heard my voice, and my supplication*, and therefore he goes on to thank him. You *are to watch unto prayer with thanksgiving*: and therefore, as to watch to observe, and recollect your owne wants which you are to pray for, that you may have matter of requests to put up; so GODS answers for matter of thanksgiving; and many fill that common place head full of matter, to furnish them for petitioning; but as for the other of thanksgiving, they watch not unto, nor study matter for that head also; and if any study will furnish you this way, it is the studying out of *Gods* answers to your prayers. The reason you pray so much, and give thankes so little is, that you observe not *Gods* answers:

Reason 4. God may bee provoked not to answer at all.

Reason 5. Wee shall not returne thanks to *God* for hearing us.

Col. 4. 2.

swers: you doe not study them. For as the Apostle sayes, that if *one prayes in an unknowne tongue, how shall the people say, Amen, and give thankes with understanding.* So if we understand not *Gods* answers, and compare not our prayers with them, how shall we give thankes? When we have put up a faithfull prayer, *God* is made our debtor by promise, and we are to take notice of his paiment; and give him an acknowledgement of the receipt of it, he looseth of his glory else.

CHAP. I.

1 Cor. 14.

6. As *God* looseth, so you also the experience which you might get by it. 1. Both experience of *God* and his faithfulnesse, which will cause in you, hope and confidence in *God* another time, when you have found him againe and againe, answering your prayers. It was a speech of one eminent in holinesse, upon occasion of the accomplishment of a great request made to *God* by him, That *God* having never denied him any request, *I have tried* God *often, now I will trust him*; if the hearing the prayers of another, will encourage others to goe to *God*, as *Psal.* 33.5. *For this cause shall every one that is godly pray unto thee*; much more when we observe and have experience that our owne are heard: therefore (sayes *David*) *Psal.* 116. 1, 2. *The Lord hath heard me, and I will call upon him as long as I live:* as if he had said, Now *God* hath heard me, I know whither to goe: this experiment if I had no more, is enough to encourage me for ever to pray to God; I have learned to call upon him whilest I live. And also 2. by observing *Gods* answers to your prayers, you will gaine much insight into your owne hearts, and wayes, and prayers; and may thereby learne

Reason 6. We lose much experience.

1 Of *Gods* faithfulnesse to us.

2 Of our owne hearts & wayes towards him.

CHAP. I.

learne how to Iudge of them. So *Pſal.* 66.18,19. *Davids* aſſurance that he did not regard iniquity in his heart, was ſtrengthned by *Gods* hearing his prayers; for thus he reaſons, *If I regard iniquity in my heart*, God *will not heare me, but* God *hath heard me.* For if *God* doth not grant your petitions, it will put you to ſtudy a reaſon of that his dealing: and ſo come to ſearch into your prayers, and the carriage of your hearts therein, to ſee whether you *did not pray amiſſe*; *Ye luſt and have not, becauſe yee aske amiſſe, Iames* 4.3. As if you ſend to a friend and receive no anſwer, you will begin to think there is ſomething in it. And ſo alſo here. When a Petition is denied, you will be jealous of your ſelves, and inquiſitive: and ſo by the ſearch come to ſee that in your prayers which you will learne to mend the next time. Or if they bee anſwered, yet becauſe that uſually *God* deales in a proportion with you to your prayers, as you might perceive if you would obſerve his dealings with you; you would come to have much inſight into *Gods* acceptation, and opinion of your wayes: For you ſhould ſee His dealings with you, and yours with Him, to be parallell and correſpondent, and hold proportion each with other. So *Pſal.* 18.6. *In my diſtreſſe I called upon the Lord*, and ſo *Verſe* 7,8, &c. he goes on to deſcribe his deliverance: and then at 20, 21. *verſes*, &c. he addes his obſervation upon it, *According to the cleanneſſe of my hands hath hee dealt with me, &c. For with the pure thou ſhalt ſhew thy ſelfe pure.*

Reaſon 7. Wee ſhall loſe much comfort.

You will loſe much of your comfort: there is no greater joy than to ſee prayers anſwered, or to ſee

ſee ſoules converted by us, *Iohn* 16.24. *Aske and you ſhall receive, that your joy may be full*: the receiving anſwers makes joy to abound and overflow. Yea, even when we pray for others; if our prayers bee anſwered for them, our joyes are exceeding great; much more when in our owne behalfe: and therein even in the ſmalleſt things which a Chriſtian doth enjoy doth his comfort exceed anothers, that he hath them by vertue of prayers and promiſes: he knowes how he came by them, *If ſtolne waters bee ſweet, And bread eaten in ſecret, &c.* as *Salomon* ſayes, to wicked men, *beg'd meat is much more ſweete* to godly men: yea, in praying for outward mercies there is more ſweetneſſe than they have in enjoying them. As it is joy to a good heart to ſee any one converted, but much more to him that is the meanes of it. *I have no greater joy* (ſayes S. *Iohn*) *then that my children walke in truth*: ſo to ſee *God* doe good to his Church, and heare others prayers, is a comfort, but much more to ſee him doe it at a mans owne prayers. Therefore when *God* reſtores comfort to a drooping ſoule, he is ſaid, *Eſay* 57. *To reſtore comfort alſo to his mourners*, that is, to thoſe that prayed & mourned for him, as well as unto that ſoule it ſelfe; it being a comfort to them to ſee their prayers anſwered. Comfort it is many wayes: 1. To heare from *God*; as to heare from a friend, though it be but two or three words, and that although about a ſmall matter, if there be at the bottome this ſubſcription, *Your loving Father*, or, *Your aſſured friend*; it ſatisfies aboundantly: ſo alſo 2. To know that *God* is mindefull of us, accepts our works, fulfils his promiſes: 3. How doth

Prov. 9.17.

3 Iohn 4.

1

2

3

Chap. II.

doth it rejoyce one to finde one of his minde in a controversie: but that *God* and we should be *of one minde*, and concurre in the desire of the same things, *not two in the earth onely agree*; but *God* who is in heaven and we to agree, this rejoyceth the heart exceedingly. And thus it is when a man perceives his prayer answered. Therefore you lose much of your comfort in blessings, when you doe not observe answers to your prayers.

Mat. 18. 19.

Chap. 2.

Three cases propounded: The first concerning prayers for the Church, and for the accomplishment of such promises as may fall out in ages to come:

NOw concerning rules and helpes to finde out *Gods* meaning towards you in your prayers; and to spie out answers; and how to know when *God* doth any thing in answer to your prayers: this is the next thing to be handled: first I will answer some cases and queries which may fall out in severall sorts of prayers, about the answering of them:

1 As first, concerning prayers put up for the Church for the accomplishment of such things as fall out in ages to come.

2 Concerning prayers made for others of your friends, kindred, &c.

3 Concerning prayers for your selves or others, wherein others joyne with you.

For

CHAP. II.

Sect. 1. The full answer to such prayers is to come.

For the first. First, there may be some prayers which you must be content, never your selves to see answered in this world; the accomplishment of them not falling out in your time; such as are happily those you make, for the calling of the *Iewes*, the utter downefall of Gods enemies, the flourishing of the Gospell, the full purity and liberty of Gods Ordinances, the particular flourishing and good of the society and place thou livest in: all you whose hearts are right, doe treasure up many such prayers as these; and *sowe* much of such precious *seed*, which you must be content to have the Church (it may be) in after Ages to reape; all which prayers are not yet lost, but will have answers; for as *God* is an *eternall God*, and *Christs righteousnesse*, of *eternall* efficacy, *Dan.*9.24. *Being offered up by the eternall spirit*, *Heb.*9.14. So are prayers; which are the worke of the eternall Spirit of *Christ* made to that God in his name, and in him are eternally accepted, and of eternall force, and therefore may take place in after ages. So the prayer that S. *Stephen* made for his persecutors, tooke place in S. *Paul* when S. *Stephen* was dead. So *Davids* prayer against *Iudas*, *Psal.*109.8, 9. tooke effect above a thousand yeeres after, as appeares, *Acts* 1.20. So the prayers of the Church for three hundred yeeres in the Primitive times, That *Kings* might *come to the knowledge of the truth*, and *they leade peaceable and quiet lives in all godlinesse and honesty*, which S. *Paul* in *Nero's* time exhorted unto, 1 *Tim.*2.2. were not answered and accomplished till *Constantines* time, when the Church brought forth a Man-childe. So *Esay* 58. after he had exhorted

*Rev.*12.1.

Chap. II. horted to, and given directions to fasting and prayer in a right manner, he adjoyneth this promise: Thou shalt be called *The repairer of the breach, and the foundation of many generations*; namely for this, that his fasting and prayers might have influence into many ages yet to come, in the accomplishment of what was prayed for. And that which *Christ* layes of the Apostles, reaping the fruit of S. *Iohn* the Baptists ministery; and the seed he had sowne, is in like manner herein verified. *Iohn* 4.37. *One soweth and another reapeth*: and in this sense, that which the Papists say is true, that there is a common treasury of the *Church*, not of their *merits*, but of their *prayers*: there are *bottels of teares* a filling, *Vials* a fitting to be powred out for the destruction of *Gods* enemies: what a collection of prayers hath there beene these many ages towards it? and that may be one reason why *God* will doe such great things towards the end of the world; even because there hath beene so great a stock of prayers going, so many ages, which is now returned: and herein it fals out to us in our *prayers*, as in the *prophecies* to the *Prophets* of old, *The Spirit in them did signifie the sufferings of* Christ, *and the glory that should follow.* 1 Pet. 1.11. *Vnto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things that are now revealed*: so is it in the *spirit of prayer*, which is instead of the *spirit of prophecy*: for wee pray through the guidance of the spirit (*who teacheth us what to aske*) for many things that follow in after ages.

Sect. 2. Yet they may have an answer at present, in assurance both that they shall come to passe, and of the acceptation of our prayers for them.

Onely at present in prayer, it may be thou hast revealed unto thee by a secret impression made on

thy

thy ſpirit, that theſe things ſhall come to paſſe, and ſo haſt thy faith confirmed in them: and withall an evidence, that even for thy prayers, among others, God will performe them: and that the contribution of thy prayers, helpes to make up the ſumme: and upon ſuch prayers *God* uſually for the preſent alſo teſtifies the acceptation of thy perſon, and reveales himſelfe moſt to thee that thou art his; as he did to *Moſes*; he never revealed his love to *Moſes* more, than when he prayed moſt for *Gods* people. For then *God* offered to *make a Nation of him*: and happily thou haſt that as one of thy beſt evidences, thy heart is right, that thou canſt pray for the Churches good; though for a long time to come, which thou mayſt not behold with thine eyes, as *David* did, and rejoyced in it. CHAP. II.

Sect. 3. And in Heaven we ſhal rejoyce at the accompliſhment of them: and at the day of judgement,

And when they are accompliſhed, and thou in heaven, thy joy will ſurely be the more full: as at the converſion of thoſe thou haſt prayed for, ſo at the ruine of the Churches enemies, &c. whom thou didſt pray againſt; For if there bee *joy in heaven at the converſion of a ſinner*, as at the birth of a new Prince and Heire of heaven, then happily in a proportion hee ſhall rejoyce more, whoſe prayers had moſt hand in it, and a ſpeciall intereſt in it. And ſo as thy other workes, ſo thy prayers *follow thee*, and *the fruit of them*, as *Ieremy* ſpeakes: and how ever, yet at the day of Iudgement, thou ſhalt rejoyce, as well as they that enjoyed the fruit of thy prayers in their times, thou having ſowne the ſeed of their happineſſe; *both hee that ſowes, and he that reapes ſhall then rejoyce together*, as Chriſt ſayes, *Iohn* 4. 36.

CHAP. III

CHAP. 3.

The second case, concerning prayers made for others: Of our friends, &c. How answered?

2 CAse is, concerning answers to our prayers for others, as for particular men, and friends, and kindred, &c. and temporall blessings.

Pray for others we ought.

Pray for others you know we must: so the Elders of the Church for those that are sick. *Iames* 5. 15, 16. *Pray one for another*, saies S. *Iames*, as in case a man is troubled with a lust, tell some private friend of it, *Confesse your sinnes one to another*; and whē thy prayers are not strong enough to cast it out it may, by the help of his prayers joyned wth thine, *That yee may bee healed, verse* 16. For so I understand healing, in *V.* 16. So also 1 *Iohn* 5. 16. *If a man see his brother sin a sin, which is not unto death*, that is not against the *Holy Ghost*, he shall aske life for him, and *God* shall give him life that sins not unto death.

Concerning this case I give these considerations.

Sect. 1. Such prayers for others God often granteth.

1 Consideration. Such prayers *God* often heareth; why else are any such promises made, as *that they shall be healed in their bodies*. Iames 5. 15. *Healed of their lusts*, *V.* 16. *Converted to life*. 1 *Ioh.* 5. 16. *God* hath made these to encourage us to pray, and to testifie his aboundant love to us; that it so overflowes and runs over; that he will heare us not only

ly for our ſelves, but for others alſo: which is a ſigne we are in extraordinary favour. So *God* intimates concerning *Abraham*, to *Abimelech*, *Gen.* 20. 7. *He is a Prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee*, and *thou ſhalt live*: and as *he* was a *Prophet*, ſo *we are Prieſts*; as for our ſelves, ſo for others alſo, to *God our Father*: and it is a prerogative we have through the fellowſhip we have, and communion of *Chriſts Prieſtly office, who hath made us Kings and Prieſts*, to prevaile and intercede for others; and it is a ſpeciall token and pledge of his extraordinary ſpeciall love. For if *God* heares a mans prayers for others, much more for himſelfe in his owne behalfe. So when he healed the man ſick of the palſie, it was as it is ſaid, *For the faith of the ſtanders by*, Matth. 9. 2. *He ſeeing their faith, ſaid, Thy ſins are forgiven thee*; the meaning is, not as if for their faith ſake he forgave that man his ſinnes, for *The juſt doe live by his* (owne) *faith*: but to encourage them to pray out of faith for others; he then tooke occaſion to declare and pronounce it, to the poore man; hee therefore then ſaid, *thy ſins are forgiven thee.* CH. 4. III.

Rev. 1. 6.

Hab. 2. 4.

2 Conſideration: yet ſecondly, prayers for others may often alſo not obtaine the particular thing prayed for them. So *Samuels* prayer for *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 35. So *David* for his enemies, *Pſalme* 37. 13. Sect. 2. Yet alwayes they doe not prevaile for the parties prayed for.

For it is in this, as it is in the uſe of other meanes and ordinances for the good of others; *God* making ſuch like kinde of promiſes to their prayers herein, as he hath made to our endeavours to convert when we preach to men: that looke as we preach to many, and yet but few beleeve, for, *Who hath beleeved* The Reaſon.

CHAP. III.

our report? even as many as are *ordained to eternal life*; we *become all to all, and winne but some*: So wee pray
Rom. 10. 16. for many, not knowing who are ordained to eternal life, which whilest we know not, we are yet to pray for them. 1 *Tim.* 2. 3. 4. Onely as where GOD hath set His Ordinance of Preaching, it is more then a probable signe he hath some to convert, and usually the word takes among some, though often but a few: So when He hath stirred up our hearts to pray for others, it is a signe GOD will heare us, for some of those we pray for: yet so as we may be denyed, for God doth require it as a duty on our parts, it being also an outward meanes ordained by God, by which sometimes Hee useth to bring to passe that we pray for, but yet not such a certaine infallible meanes, as hee hath tyed himselfe universally unto, to bring the thing to passe on his part.

Such promises to heare us for others being but indefinite not universall.

And though indeed his promise to heare and accept the prayers is generall and universall, yet the promise to heare it by granting the very thing it selfe prayed for, is but an indefinite promise, such a promise as he makes to other meanes of doing men good, as to our admonitions and reproofes, and to our preaching *&c.* *Hee makes such promises because sometimes hee doth heare* and convert by them: for instance that *promise. Iam.* 5. 15. *of healing the sicke*, cannot be universall, seeing by that meanes it might then bee supposed as a truth that sicke men might never dye, when as it is *appointed for all men once to*
Heb. 9. 27. *dye*: seing it may be supposed that the elders may at all such times of danger of death still come and pray with them: but the meaning is, that it being

an

an Ordinance which GOD hath made a gratious promiſe unto, becauſe *he often* performes it and reſtores the ſicke at their praiers, therfore upon every ſuch particular occaſion we are to rely upon God for it, by an act of recumbency, though with an act of full aſſurance that we ſhall obtaine it, we cannot; the promiſe being not univerſall but indefinite. CHAP. III.

Of the like nature are all other promiſes of things temporall and outward, (of which we now ſpeake) as when God promiſeth to *give long life* to them that *honour their parents, riches and honours to them that feare Him*, the tenour and purport of which promiſes are not, as if abſolutely infallibly and univerſally, God doth alwayes performe theſe to thoſe that are yet truely qualified with the conditions ſpecified in thoſe promiſes. Illuſtrated by the like tenour of all promiſes of things temporall.

The contrary both Scripture inſtances and common experience ſhewes, they are therefore indefinitely meant and ſo to be underſtood by us; for, becauſe GOD hath purpoſed in his outward diſpenſation of things here in this world, to beſtowe riches and honours upon ſome that feare him (though not upon all, for how then ſhould *all things fall alike to all?* Poverty and contempt upon them *that feare God*, even as well as thoſe that *feare Him not.*) hath therefore indefinitely expreſſed His gratious diſpenſation herein: requiring anſwerably an act of faith (which principle in us is ſuited to a promiſe, as a facultie is to its proper object) ſuitable to that his meaning in the promiſe; That as he intended not in ſuch promiſes an abſolute, infallible, univerſall obligation of himſelfe, to the performance of them to all that feare him: ſo the act of faith which *Eccleſ. 7. 2.* The faith towards them required to beg but an indefinite act of recumbency not of aſſurance.

CHAP. III.

which a man is to put forth toward this promiſe, in the application of it, for a mans owne particular, is not required to be an abſolute, infallible perſwaſion, and aſſurance that God will beſtowe theſe outward things upon him, having theſe qualifications in him; but that which is required is an *indefinite act* (as I may ſo call it) *of recumbency and ſubmiſſion*, caſting and adventuring our ſelves upon him for the performance of it to us, not knowing but he may in his outward diſpenſations make it good to us, yet with ſubmiſſion to His good pleaſure, if otherwiſe He diſpoſeth it.

Though of aſſurance to the promiſe in generall, yet not in the application of it.

It is true indeed that that act of generall aſſent which faith is to give to this promiſe in the general abſtract truth of it, is to bee an aſſured certaine perſwaſion and beleefe, that God hath made the promiſe, and that He will certainely, and doth performe it unto ſome according to His purpoſe expreſſed therein, becauſe He hath promiſed ſo to do: which act of generall aſſent, is that beleeving without wavering, namely of the truth of the promiſe in generall which *Saint Iames* calls for in prayer. *Iam.* 1.6. yet that ſpeciall act of application (as Divines call it) required in this faith whereby I am to reſt upon it for my owne particular, doth not require ſuch an undoubted perſwaſion to bee put forth towards it, as, to thinke that I ſhall certainely have this particular promiſe in kinde fulfilled to mee; for the truth, purpoſe, and intent of the promiſe, is not univerſall, but indefinite. So as it is but an *it may be* (as God elſewhere expreſſeth ſuch promiſes as *Zeph.* 2. 1,2.) That it ſhall be performed to mee, and yet becauſe it may be God will performe it unto me, therefore

my

my duty is to caſt my ſelfe upon GOD, and put in for it, with ſubmiſſion to His good pleaſure for the performance of it to me: So that ſo farre as the truth and intent of it, is revealed to bee infallible and certaine, ſo farre a man is bound to have an anſwerable act of *faith*, of certaine and infallible perſwaſion towards it, as to beleeve without wavering that God hath made ſuch a promiſe, and wil performe it according to His intent in making it, which is *unto ſome*; but yet becauſe the tenour of it, is but indefinite, and in that reſpect, whether it ſhall be performed to me or no, is not therein certainely revealed, Therefore God requires not of me in the application of ſuch a promiſe an abſolute full perſwaſion that Hee will performe it to mee in ſuch or ſuch a manner, *&c.* But onely an act of dependance and adherence with reference to his wiſe and righteous good pleaſure towards me. CHAP. II.

Tis true indeed if God ſhould at any time give a man ſuch a ſpeciall *faith* concerning any ſuch particular temporall bleſſing for himſelfe or an other, that then he is bound to believe it for his owne particular; as when Hee gave power to any one to worke miracles (as to His Apoſtles Hee did with a Commiſſion to worke them.) Then they were bound to believe that ſuch and ſuch a miracle ſhould infallibly bee wrought by them, as that the Divels ſhould be caſt out by them, *&c.* And therfore in this caſe CHRIST rebukes His Diſciples for not believing this upon ſuch particular occaſions. *Matth.* 17.20. and then it is alſo true, that if God give ſuch a *faith*, Hee will infallibly performe it: and ſo His words are to bee underſtood.

Yet when God ſometimes gives a ſpeciall faith, then wee are to bee aſſured the thing ſhall be done.

CHA. III.

An objection prevented.

Matth. 27. 22. *Whatsoever yee aske in faith believing, yee shall receive,* he speakes it of the faith of *miracles* for 21. *ver.* he had said, *if yee beleeve and doubt not, yee shall say to this Mountaine, remoove into the Sea, and it shall be remooved:* so that, when God workes such a faith, and we are called to it, we are bound to believe with a certaine perswasion that such a thing will be done, and it shall bee done; but unto such a kinde of speciall faith in temporall promises for our selves or others, God doth not now alwaies call us; if indeed at any time we did believe and doubted not, by reason of a speciall faith wrought by GOD, that GOD would remove a mountaine into the Sea, or bestow any outward mercy, it should bee done; for hee that stirred up such a *faith,* would accomplish the thing; but yet it is not that, which God requires of beleevers, that they should without doubting thus beleeve concerning outward things; the promises thereof being not universall but indefinite, therefore answerably a man is not absolutely bound to beleeve that God will certainely bestow such a temporall blessing on him, no not though hee should have the qualification, which the promise is made unto, the promise being not universall, made to all so qualified, but indefinite to some of such so qualified. Only if at any time God should worke such a *faith* in a man, (which is rare,) then he might and ought to beleeve, it should bee done according to his faith, and the case is the same of beleeving promises made to our praying for others, which is the thing in hand.

Sect. 3. Such prayers for others often returned into our owne bosome,

3 When the prayers are thus made out of conscience

ſcience of our duty; for ſuch whom yet *God* doth not intend that mercy unto, then they are returned againe to our advantage, into our owne boſomes: even as S. *Paul* ſayth, *that his rejoicing that others preached*, though they loſt their labour, ſhould *turne to his ſalvation. Phil.* 1. 20. So prayers for others, though to the parties themſelves we prayed for, they prove in vaine, yet they turne to our ſalvation. So *Pſal.* 35. 12, 13. *When his enemies were ſick*, David, *he prayed and humbled himſelfe*, and *my prayers* (ſaies he) *returned into my boſome: David* did by this his prayer in ſecret for his enemies, teſtifie the ſinceritie of his heart to *God*, and his true forgiveneſſe of them (for it is the uſuall diſpoſition of Gods children, to pray for them that are the greateſt enemies to them) and this praier though it did not profit them, yet it turned to *Davids* own good, it came backe, and home againe to him, with bleſſings to himſelfe, *God* delighting in, and rewarding ſuch a diſpoſition in his child, as much as any other; becauſe therein we reſemble *Chriſt* ſo truly, and ſhew that *God* is our Father, and our ſelves to have his bowels in us; and *God* ſtirreth up this praying diſpoſition in his children for their enemies, not alwayes that he meanes to heare them for them, but becauſe he meanes to draw forth, and ſo have an occaſion to reward thoſe holy diſpoſitions, which are the nobleſt parts of his image in them, and wherewith he is ſo much delighted; and ſo their prayers returne into their owne boſome, and it is taken, as if they had prayed for themſelves all that while. Thus in like manner, when *Moſes* prayed ſo earneſtly for the people of *Iſrael*, God offered

CHA. III.

The Reaſon.

CHAP. III. offered to returne his prayer into his own boſome, and doe as much for him alone, as he had deſired
Exod. 32. 10. that *God* would doe for them. *I will make of thee a great Nation* (ſayes *God* to him) for whō I will doe as much for thy ſake, as thou haſt prayed I ſhould doe for theſe. As in preaching the Goſpell, *Chriſt* told the Diſciples, That if in any houſe they came to preach peace unto, there were not a *Son of peace*, *Luke* 10. on whom the meſſage might take place, and their peace reſt, *Your peace* (ſayes he) *ſhall returne unto you againe.* So is it, if your prayers take not place.

Sect. 4. God often in the end caſts ſuch out of our prayers he intends not to heare us for.

4 If we have praied long for thoſe whom *God* intends not mercy unto, he will in the end caſt them out of our prayers and hearts, and take our hearts off from praying for them. That which he did by a revelation from heaven to ſome Prophets of old, as to *Samuel* and *Ieremiah*; the ſame he doth by a more undiſcerned worke; that is, by withdrawing aſſiſtance to pray for ſuch; by withdrawing the ſpirit of ſupplication from a man, for ſome men, and in ſome buſineſſes: Now thus he did with *Samuel*, *Why doeſt thou mourne for Saul?* 1 *Sam.* 16. 1.
The Reaſon. So with *Ieremiah*, *Ier.* 7. 16. *Pray not for this people*: and this he doth, becauſe hee is loth when his people doe pray but to heare them: and would not that ſuch precious breath as that of prayer is, ſhould be without its full and direct ſucceſſe, or be in vaine: therefore when he meanes not to heare, he layes the key of prayer out of the way, ſo deſirous is he to give anſwers to every prayer. It fals out in this caſe of praying for another, as in reproving another. One whom *God* intends not good

unto,

unto, *God* will lock up a mans heart towards ſuch a man, that he ſhall not be able to reprove him; when towards another *God* doth inlarg it as much, where he intends good; thus it is ſometimes in praying for another; ſo as in praying a man ſhall not be able to pray for, nor reprove a man, though his heart be to doe both: but it fareth with him as *God* threatneth concerning *Ezekiel* towards the people, that hee makes his *tongue cleave to the roofe of his mouth.* CHAP. III *Ezek.* 3. 26.

Sect. 5. *God* ſometimes anſwers thoſe prayers in ſome others whom we prayed not for. The Reaſon.

5 God will heare thoſe prayers for, and anſwer them in ſome others, in whom wee ſhall have as much comfort, as in thoſe we praied for: and ſo it often proves and fals out: *God*, to ſhew *he lookes not as man lookes*, nor chooſeth as he chooſeth, lets our hearts be ſet on worke to pray for the converſion or good of one he intends not mercy to; and then anſwers them in ſome other, whom *God* makes as deere unto us: when *God* had caſt of *Saul*, ſtill *Samuels* heart lingred after him, and he mourned for him: but God at the ſame time, when he bids him ceaſe mourning for *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 16. to ſhew that yet he accepted that his mourning as it came from him; *Goe* (ſayes he) *and anoint one of the Sons of Ieſſe*, 1 *Sam.* 16. 1. *Samuel* deſired to ſee a good ſucceſſor in that government, and he having beene their ruler, it was his ſpeciall care; and he having anointed *Saul*, that he ſhould prove ſo wicked, exceedingly grieved him; and *God* ſaw and anſwered the ground of his deſires; and therefore immediately upon his prayers, ſent him to anoint the beſt King that ever was upon that Throne, who was the iſſue and Man-childe of his prayers. And againe, when *Samuel* came to anoint one of the Sons

Cha. IV. Sons of *Ieſſe*, when he ſaw *Eliab*, verſ. 6. *Surely* (ſayes he) *the Lords anointed is before me.* If *Samuel* had beene to chooſe, he would have choſen him, and would have prayed for and deſired him: but *God ſeeth not as man ſeeth, verſ. 7. and chooſeth not as man chooſeth:* but in *David* was his prayer fully heard, and anſwered, and that better. So *Abraham* he had prayed for *Iſhmael*, *Oh let Iſhmael live in thy ſight*, *Gen.* 17. but *God* gave him *Iſaac* inſtead of him. So perhaps thou prayeſt for one childe more than for another, out of thy naturall affection, looking *on his countenance* and ſtature; as *Samuel* did on *Eliab's*: but yet thy prayers being ſincere in the ground of them, in that thou deſireſt a childe of Promiſe, *God* therefore anſwers thee, though in another, for whom yet haply, thy heart was not ſo much ſtirred; who yet when he is converted, proves to thee as great a comfort; and it is as much as if that other thou didſt moſt pray for, had beene wrought upon.

Chap. 4.

The third caſe, about ſuch prayers wherein others joyne with us: How therein to diſcerne the influence of our owne prayers.

THE third Caſe to be conſidered is, when a man prayes for ſomething with others, or which others likewiſe pray for with him, ſo as he is not alone in it; how then ſhould he know, that his prayers have a hand in obtaining it, as wel as theirs?

For

For in ſuch caſes *Satan* is apt to object, though the thing is granted indeed; yet not for thy prayers, but for the prayers of thoſe others joyned in it with thee.

Sect. 1. If our hearts were affected in praying with the ſame holy affections where with others that prayed with us were.

1 If thy heart did ſympathize and accord in the ſame holy affections with thoſe others in praying, then it is certaine thy voice hath helpt to carry it; *If two agree on earth* (ſayes *Chriſt*) *Mat.*18.19. the word is συμφωνησωσιν, which is as much as if hee had ſaid, if they harmonially agree to play the ſame tune: (for prayers are muſick in Gods eares, and ſo called *Melody to God*, *Eph.*5.19.) It is not ſimply their agreeing in the thing praied for, but in the affections: for it is the affections that make the conſort and the melody: now if the ſame holy affections were toucht and ſtruck by *Gods* ſpirit in thy heart, that in theirs, then thou doeſt helpe to make up the conſort; and without thee it would have beene imperfect; yea, without thee the thing might not have beene done, for *God* ſtands ſometimes upon ſuch a number of voices, and one voice caſts it; as when he named ten perſons in *Sodome*: when therefore the ſame holy motives and affection acted thee in thy prayer, which did them in theirs, it it was the worke of the ſame ſpirit, both in them and thee, and *God* hath heard it.

Eſpecially whē this ſympathy is unbeknowne each to other.

2 If God did ſtirre up the ſame ſecret inſtinct in thee, ſo as thy heart did ſympathize with anothers, in praying for ſuch a thing unbeknowne one to another, as ſometimes it fals out; then ſurely thy prayers are in it as well as theirs. You ſhall obſerve ſometimes a generall inſtinct of the Spirit, put into *Gods* peoples hearts, generally to pray for or againſt

CHAP. IV

against a thing, without each others stirring up one another: even as *Ezekiel* by the River *Chebar* prophecied the same things *Ieremiah* did at home at *Ierusalem*. Thus against the time that *Christ* the *Messiah* came in the flesh, there was a great expectation raised up in the hearts of the godly people, to looke and pray for him, *Luke* 2.27. and 38.

Sect 2. By some speciall evidence: as first, sometimes by some notable circumstance.

3 God doth usually and often evidence to a man, that his prayers contributed, and went among the rest towards the obtaining of it; as,

1 By some circumstance: as for example: sometimes by ordering it so, that that man that prayed most for a thing of concernment, should have the first newes of it when it comes to be accomplisht: which *God* doth, as knowing it will be most welcome newes to him; God doth herein as we doe with a friend, who we know is cordial in, and wisheth well to a businesse; he sends him the first word of it, who prayed most about it. Good old *Simeon* had surely beene earnest in seeking the Lord, as well as the rest in *Hierusalem*, to send the *Messiah* into the world, to restore and raise up the ruines of *Israel*: for *God* did reveale to him, that he should see him before he died; and to evidence to him his respect to his prayers, *God* carried the good old man into the Temple, just at the time when the Childe was brought into the Temple, for to *bee presented to the Lord*, *Luke* 2.27.28. And in like manner good *Anna*, *who had served God with fasting and prayer, night and day*, God ordereth it also, that she must also come in at the same instant, *Luke* 2. 38. By some such like peculiar circumstance or other, God doth often use to witnesse to a mans heart,

heart, that hee hath heard him in common busi-
nesses.

CHA. IV.

2 By filling the heart with much joy in the accompliſhment of what a man prayed for; which is an evident argument that his prayers did move the Lord to effect it, as wel as the prayers of others: Thus that good old *Simeon*, ſeeing now his prayers anſwered, he was even willing to dye through joy; and thought he could not dye in a better time, *Lord now let thy ſervant depart in peace*: and ſo *Iſay* 57. when any have prayed for a poore diſtreſſed ſoule, and *God* raiſeth him up againe, when he doth reſtore joy to him, It is ſaid to rejoyce all thoſe that praid for him, *I will reſtore comforts to him and to his mourners*, 8.18. For when the deſires have vented and laid out much of themſelves, then when the returne comes home, they have an anſwerable part and ſhare in the comfort of it: and as diverſe abounded in praying, ſo will joy and comfort alſo in the accompliſhment. As when a ſhip comes home, not onely the chiefe owners, but every one that ventured ſhall have a ſhare out of the returne, in a proportion: ſo here, though ſome one hath a ſpeciall intereſt in the mercy obtained, whom it mainely concernes; yet thou ſhalt have thy prayers out in joy from *God*, that the thing is granted. S. *Paul* had planted a Church at *Theſſalonica*, but he could not ſtay to water it with his owne preaching, yet when abſent, he waters thoſe Plants which he had ſet, with prayers, night and day, 1 *Theſ.* 3.10. *Night and day praying exceedingly for you*, ſayes he: and as his prayers were exceeding aboundant for them, ſo was his joy as aboundant in them, when hee had heard

Secondly, by the hearts being filled with much joy in the accompliſhment.

CHAP. IV

heard that they ſtood ſtedfaſt, and fell not backe againe, *Now we live, if ye ſtand faſt in the Lord*, V. 8. *And what thankes can we render to God for all the joy wherewith we joy for your ſakes, before the Lord?* V. 9.

3 By thankfulneſſe for it when accompliſht.

3 If *God* give you a heart thankfull for a bleſſing vouchſafed to another, prayed for by you with others, it is another ſigne your prayers have ſome hand in it; S. *Paul* knew not *what thankes to give* for the anſwering of his prayers, as in that forementioned place.

Sect. 3. Eſpecially whē the thing obtained concernes a mans own particular

And laſtly, in caſe the thing concerned thy ſelfe, which was prayed for by others, helping thee therein; what cauſe haſt thou but to think that it was granted for thy owne prayers? and not for theirs only; ſeeing *God* ſtir'd up their hearts to pray for thee, and gave thee a heart to pray for thy ſelfe, and beſides, gave thee the thing which thou deſiredſt; which argues thou art beloved as well as they, and accepted as well as they; it may be indeed, that God heard thee the ſooner through the helpe of their prayers, *I know this ſhall turne to my ſalvation through your prayers*, ſaith S. *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 19. though their prayers went to the buſineſſe, yet had not S. *Paul* beene accepted himſelfe, the prayers of all the men in the world, would have done him but little good. God may heare the prayers of the godly, for wicked men, when they doe not pray themſelves, in temporall things: ſo he did heare *Moſes* for *Pharaoh*, *Abraham* for *Abimelech*; and he may heare godly men the ſooner for others prayers: ſo he heard *Aaron* and *Miriam* the ſooner, for *Moſes*'s ſake, *Num.* 12. 13. But if *God* ſtirres up thy heart to pray for thy ſelfe, as well as others

for

for thee; then God that gave thee a heart to pray hath heard thy prayers also, and hath had a respect to them more in it than to theirs, because it concerned thy selfe, as a more speciall mercy unto thee. CHAP. V.

CHAP. 5.

Common directions helpefull in all cases and prayers. First, from such observations as may be taken, from before, *and in* praying.

HAving premised these cases, I come now to more *generall* and *common directions* to helpe you in discerning and observing the minde of *God*, and his answers to you in your prayers; all which directions are such, as may be helpful in al the forementioned cases, as in al sorts of prayers what ever; & they are taken frō *observations*, to be made upon your prayers, &c. Both *before*, *in*, and *after* praying.

Sect. 1. *Before*: when God prepares the heart to pray.

First, *Before praying*; when God bespeakes a prayer, (as I may so speake,) that is, when God secretly speakes to the heart to pray much about a thing, I expresse it thus according to that phrase of *David*, *Psa.* 27. 8. *Thou saidst, seek my face*, and I said, *Thy face Lord will I seeke*: now God then speakes to the heart to pray, when he not onely puts thee upon the duty, by saying to thy conscience, this thou oughtest to doe: but Gods speaking to the heart to pray is such, as his speech at first was, when he made the world, when he said, *Let there be light, and there was light*; of he sayes, Let there bee a prayer,

CHAP. V.

prayer, and there is a prayer; that is, he powres upon a man *a spirit of grace and supplication*, a praying disposition: he puts in motives, suggests arguments, and pleas to *God*; all which you shall finde come in readily, and of themselves, and that likewise with a quickning heat and inlargement of affections, and with a lingring, and longing, and restlessenesse of Spirit to be alone, to powre out thy soule to *God*, and to vent and forme those motions and suggestions into a prayer, till thou hast laid them together, and made a prayer of them. And this is a *speaking* to the heart: and observe such times when God doth thus, and neglect them not, then to strike, whilest the iron is hot; thou hast then his eare, it is a special opportunity for that businesse, such an one as thou mayest never have the like. Sutors at Court observe *mollissima fandi tempora*, their times of begging, when they have Kings in a good mood; but especially if the King himselfe should begin of himselfe to speake of the businesse which they would have of him: and thus that phrase of *Psal.* 10. 17. is understood by some, that *God prepares the heart, and causeth the eare to heare*; that is, he fashions it, & composeth it into a praying frame. And it is a great signe that he means to heare us, when himselfe shall thus indite a Petition.

The difference betweene Satans unseasonable urging to pray, and Gods moaning us.

And by the way let me give this note of difference, betweene these *speakings* to the heart, and those whereby Satan puts us upon such duties at unseasonable houres and times; as when wee are otherwise necessarily to be imployed in our callings, to eate, or to sleepe, &c. then to put upon praying,

praying, is a device of his he uſeth, to tire out new converts with. The difference will appeare in this; the devill comes in a violent imperious manner upon the conſcience, but inlargeth not the heart a whit unto the duty; but whenſoever *God* at ſuch extraordinary times doth call upon us, he fits and prepares the heart, and fils the ſoule with holy ſuggeſtions, as materials for the duty; for whatſoever he cals to, he gives abilities withall to the thing he cals for. CHAP. V.

And thus uſually, when he will have any great matters done and effected, hee ſets mens hearts a praying, by a kinde of gracious pre-inſtinct; hee ſtirs them up & toucheth the ſtrings of their hearts, by his Spirit ſent downe upon them: Thus againſt the returne of the captivity he ſtirred up *Daniels* heart, *Dan. 9. 1. He knowing by bookes*, the time to be neere expiring, was ſtirred up to ſeeke God: and ſo he that made this Pſalme, *Salvation being then nigh, Verſ. 9. 10.* then God ſtirred him up to pray, and pen this prayer, for their returne; which thing God had foretold, *Ier. 29. 10. 11, 12.* For having promiſed, *Verſ. 10. I will cauſe you to returne after ſeventy yeeres: Then* (ſayes he, *Verſ. 12.*) *ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go & pray unto me, and I wil hearken unto you*: he ſpeakes it not only by way of command; what it was they ought to do, but as propheſying alſo what they ſhould doe; for then he meant to ſtirre up their hearts; as then he did, as appeares by thoſe forementioned inſtances. Therefore obſerve what things God thus by an inſtinct doth inlarge thy heart to pray for at times: and ſometimes at extraordinery times, when happily thou

CHAP. V.

didst not thinke to pray about any such thing, yet he then stird thee up most; as it may be, as thou wert walking, &c. and having spare time, Hee drawes thee into His presence and mooves thee in that manner specified.

Sect. 2. *In praier Gods speaking* to the heart in prayer, an evidence of hearing: which may be discerned.

Now secondly: as *God* thus speakes to the heart to pray; so also *in praying*; and His *speaking* to the heart *in prayer* may bee discerned by these particulars.

1 By giving a quiet rest of spirit about the thing prayed for, in and by prayer.

1 When GOD quiets, and calmes, and contents the heart in *prayer*, which is done, by speaking something to the heart; though, what is spoken, bee not alwayes discerned: If you should see one, who was an earnest and importunate suitor and exceeding anxious when hee went in, to a great man, but behold him after comming out from him contented, and quieted, and cheerefull in his spirit, you would certainely thinke that something had beene said to him, which gave him encouragement, satisfaction and contentment in his suit: Thus when thou goest to GOD, and hast beene importunate in a businesse, (as suppose for CHRIST; *oh give me* CHRIST, *or else I dye,*) and thy desires were exceedingly up for it; But thou risest up with thy minde calmed and satisfied, and feelest the anxiousnes, the solicitude of thy hart about the thing taken off, and dispelled; This is a good signe that GOD hath heard thy *prayer*, and hath spoken something to thy heart, which makes it thus composed. When *Hannah* out of much bitternesse and with strong desires (which by a long delay had beene made more violent, so as her heart was much disquieted (for, *Prov.* 13. 12. *Hope*, and by the same reason,

reason, desire also *deferd makes the soule sicke*) when out of the abundance of her griefe, *shee had poured her soule out before the Lord.* 1 *Sam.* 1. 16. *Eli* the *Priest* saying to her by a prophetical spirit, *the Lord grant thy petition*, after that *prayer* shee found her heart so quieted, *that shee looked no more sad*, as the Text sayes there; She arose quieted and calmed, and it was that prayer, that did both fill *Elies* mouth, with that word of prophecie, and her heart with quietnesse; and a secret word from *God* accompanying it, that did still those wayes; and accordingly *God* gave her a Son; a Son of her desire: And the like *God* doth now, by speaking (as I said) something to the heart: as by dropping in some promise or other into the heart, or the like; saying as it were to the heart, even as *Eli* from *God* did to her; *The Lord grants thy petition*; As to *Saint Paul*, when hee was earnest with God about remooving his buffetings by *Satan* (which whether they were the stirring us a lust, or temptations of *blasphemy*, I doe not now dispute) *I besought God thrice*, that is, earnestly (sayes he,) *that it might depart*; and to this hee had an answer in the meane time given him, till it should be taken away, enough to still and quiet him. 2 *Cor.* 12. 8, 9. And *he said*, that is, in *prayer* the Lord did put in this consideration and promise into his thoughts: And *he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, and my power is made perfect in weakenesse*: this answer thus comming in, this promise thus seasonably suggested stayed and quieted *Pauls* heart. In like manner thou hast (it may be) beene long *praying* against poverty, or the like distresse, and *God* lets fall this or the like

CHAP. V.

CHAP. V. *Heb.* 13. 5.

promise into thy heart; *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee*, which quiets and contents thy minde. This is an answer, and observe such answers, for they are pretious.

Sect. 3. 2 When God drawes nigh and reveales His love in and upon such a petition.

2 If whilest thou art a *praying*, *God* doth draw nigh to thy soule, and revealeth Himselfe to it, in and upon such or such a particular petition: As in case thou didst mainely intend when thou didst begin to pray, to set thy selfe to beg some temporall mercy at His hands, some great matter for the good and prosperity of the Church (as *Daniel*, *Chap.* 9. *did set himselfe* to seeke *God* for the returne of the Captivity:) and even before thou commest to aske it, or in asking it, *God* falleth about thy necke and kisseth thee, smiles upon thee, welcomes thee: This thou art to observe as a signe Hee heares thy *prayer*, and accepteth both thee and it; when there is such a strong sense of *Gods* favour, and presence, whilest thou art upon such a suite and request, more then at other times, or then in other passages of the same *prayer*, this is a token GOD heares thee, in that particular, and thou art to observe this His speaking to thy heart: When thus thou shalt no sooner come into His presence to enquire of Him, but he sayes *Here am I*; as the promise is, *Isai.* 58. 9. Therefore, *Psal.* 69. 17, 18. *Heare mee speedily*, sayes *David*, and (that I may know thou heares me) *draw nigh to mee*: therefore when *God* drawes nigh to thee, it is a signe Hee heares thee. *Daniel* having *fasted* and *prayed* for three weekes together. *Dan.* 10. 2, 3. Then an *Angell* came, and one of the three *Persons* came and told him, hee was a man *greatly beloved*, *vers.* 11. and 19. and when in like

manner

manner *God* by His Spirit comes downe, and meets thee, and tells thy heart in ſecret that thou art His beloved, and Hee is thine, then thy *prayers* are certainely heard: for if He accepts thy perſon, much more thy *prayers*. 1 *Ioh.* 5. 19, 20. Men, falſe men, *falſe upon the Ballance*, as *David* ſpeakes, when they come to be tryed and weighed, they wil out of cunning uſe ſuiters moſt kindly then, when they meane to put them off, and deny them their requeſts: But *God* who is Truth and faithfulneſſe it ſelfe, doth not uſe ſo to doe; But, when hee meanes to anſwer the *prayer*, Hee ſometimes withall reveales His free grace moſt then; to the end they may ſee and acknowledge the fountaine of all, to be his everlaſting love, and ſo take the thing granted as a fruit of it, an ſo come to bee the more abundantly thankefull. CHAP. V.

Onely let me adde this Caution, which may bee of great uſe to you. That it is not alwayes infallibly true, that when *God* drawes nigh to you in a particular requeſt, that, that requeſt in particular, ſhall be granted in that manner you deſired, but it is a certaine evidence that thy *prayer* is heard, and that the thing thou askeſt is agreeable to His will, and that he approves of thee, and thy requeſt exceedingly, and thinketh the better of thee for it, and He will give thee it, or ſomething that is better. There may bee herein and ſometimes is a miſtake of *Gods* meaning, to thinke that alwayes, then the thing ſhall be granted, when *God* drawes nigh to a man: experience ſometimes ſhewes the contrary.

A Caution: That yet this is not alwayes an infallible ſigne the thing is granted, though that the prayer is accepted:

But you will ſay, to what end doth *God* draw ſo nigh, if He meanes not to grant it? *Queſt.*

1 He ſhewes thereby His *approoving will* of the thing *Anſw.*

CHAP. V. *Heb.* 13. 5.

promiſe into thy heart; *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee*, which quiets and contents thy minde. This is an anſwer, and obſerve ſuch anſwers, for they are pretious.

Sect. 3. 2 When God drawes nigh and reveales His love in and upon ſuch a petition.

2 If whileſt thou art a *praying*, *God* doth draw nigh to thy ſoule, and revealeth Himſelfe to it, in and upon ſuch or ſuch a particular petition: As in caſe thou didſt mainely intend when thou didſt begin to pray, to ſet thy ſelfe to beg ſome temporall mercy at His hands, ſome great matter for the good and proſperity of the Church (as *Daniel*, *Chap.* 9. *did ſet himſelfe* to ſeeke *God* for the returne of the Captivity:) and even before thou commeſt to aske it, or in asking it, *God* falleth about thy necke and kiſſeth thee, ſmiles upon thee, welcomes thee: This thou art to obſerve as a ſigne Hee heares thy *prayer*, and accepteth both thee and it; when there is ſuch a ſtrong ſenſe of *Gods* favour, and preſence, whileſt thou art upon ſuch a ſuite and requeſt, more then at other times, or then in other paſſages of the ſame *prayer*, this is a token GOD heares thee, in that particular, and thou art to obſerve this His ſpeaking to thy heart: When thus thou ſhalt no ſooner come into His preſence to enquire of Him, but he ſayes *Here am I*; as the promiſe is, *Iſai.* 58. 9. Therefore, *Pſal.* 69. 17, 18. *Heare mee ſpeedily*, ſayes *David*, and (that I may know thou heareſt me) *draw nigh to mee*: therefore when *God* drawes nigh to thee, it is a ſigne Hee heares thee. *Daniel* having *faſted* and *prayed* for three weekes together. *Dan.* 10. 2, 3. Then an *Angell* came, and one of the three *Perſons* came and told him, hee was a man *greatly beloved*, *verſ.* 11. and 19. and when in like

manner

manner *God* by His Spirit comes downe, and meets thee, and tells thy heart in ſecret that thou art His beloved, and Hee is thine, then thy *prayers* are certainely heard: for if He accepts thy perſon, much more thy *prayers*. 1 *Ioh.* 5. 19, 20. Men, falſe men, *falſe upon the Ballance*, as *David* ſpeakes, when they come to be tryed and weighed, they wil out of cunning uſe ſuiters moſt kindly then, when they meane to put them off, and deny them their requeſts: But *God* who is Truth and faithfulneſſe it ſelfe, doth not uſe ſo to doe; But, when hee meanes to anſwer the *prayer*, Hee ſometimes withall reveales His free grace moſt then; to the end they may ſee and acknowledge the fountaine of all, to be his everlaſting love, and ſo take the thing granted as a fruit of it, an ſo come to bee the more abundantly thankefull. CHAP. V.

Onely let me adde this Caution, which may bee of great uſe to you. That it is not alwayes infallibly true, that when *God* drawes nigh to you in a particular requeſt, that, that requeſt in particular, ſhall be granted in that manner you deſired, but it is a certaine evidence that thy *prayer* is heard, and that the thing thou askeſt is agreeable to His will, and that he approves of thee, and thy requeſt exceedingly, and thinketh the better of thee for it, and He will give thee it, or ſomething that is better. There may bee herein and ſometimes is a miſtake of *Gods* meaning, to thinke that alwayes, then the thing ſhall be granted, when *God* drawes nigh to a man: experience ſometimes ſhewes the contrary.

A Caution: That yet this is not alwayes an infallible ſigne the thing is granted, though that the prayer is accepted:

But you will ſay, to what end doth *God* draw ſo nigh, if He meanes not to grant it? *Queſt.*

1 He ſhewes thereby His *approoving will* of the thing *Anſw.*

CHA. V.

The reasons why God sometimes drawes nigh when He grants not the thing.

thing *prayed* for; now *God* approoves many things, Hee decrees not. There is His *approoving will* and His decreeing will. *God* may shew His *approoving will* of the thing thou askest: (as suppose it bee in view a matter which is of great consequence for the Church.) and this He doth for thy encouragement: but yet it followes not, that His decreeing will is for the accomplishment of that very thing in particular.

2 *God* may accept the person and the *prayer*, when He doth not grant the thing prayed for, and by that drawing nigh witnes His acceptation of thy person and the *prayer*. Yea,

3 That revealing of Himselfe is oftentimes all the answer He intended to such a *prayer*, and it is answer enough too, to enjoy in the stead of a particular mercy the assurance of *Gods* love; As suppose thou didst pray against some evill comming upon His Church, which he yet intends to bring, which he did set thy heart a worke to *pray* against, thereby to manifest the sincerity thereof, and then He seeing thee thus sincere, drawes nigh to thee, and tells thee, how ever it shall goe well with thee, and that thou art greatly beloved of Him: Thou art sometime to take this for all the answer He meanes to give; and this Hee doth sometimes also to content the heart, and prepare it for a deniall in the thing: whereas, otherwise, the denialls of what Christians have been earnest in, might occasion (as in many it doth) a questioning and doubting of *Gods* love. Yet however, this you are to observe as a speaking from GOD, for it is an answere.

CHA. V.

Sect. 4. God sometimes stirs up a particular faith of assurance in some businesses.

3 When *God stirres* up in the heart a particular faith in a businesse, as sometimes He doth, and upholds the heart to waite for it, maugre all discouragements; So he did in *David*, *Psa.* 27. 3. *David* was thē in great hazards by reason of *Saul*, or *Absalom*, or who ever else, and those such and so often, as that to sence and outward probabilities he was like never to live quietly againe at *Ierusalem*, and enjoy *Gods* Ordinances there in peace; but for this *David* had *praied*, and had made it as the grand request of his whole life (as every man hath some one great request of all other, even as Hee hath some speciall grace above all other, or gift, *&c.* So request to *God* next to His salvation, as happily for his Ministery, or the like, therefore sayes *David*, *verse* 4. *This one thing have I desired*, as if he had said, if I should bee put to my choyce, to have all outward things else denied me, and this granted, yet this one thing I would seek;) and accordingly *God* gave him a speciall faith in this thing, above all other, because it was his great request; *In this will I bee confident*, *vers.* 3. And though *an hoste* of men should againe and againe *incompasse me*, saies he, yet *in this I will be confident*, that I shall still escape, and see *Ierusalem* againe, and enjoy the Ordinances and live in *peace*, and though his *faith* failed him often (as in the persecution of *Saul* it did) for he sayd he *should one day perish by the hand of Saul*: yet at other times his *faith* was marvellously upheld, and hee was *confident* in this. Hee used not to bee so, in other requests thus absolutely particularly and distinctly; and therefore he sayes, *In this*, *&c.* As there is a witnesse of the *Holy Ghost* immediate to the heart, sealing up

1 Sam. 27. 1.

CHAP. V. adoption to a mans perſon, ſo in ſome caſes, there is the like teſtimony, for the obtaining of ſome eminent things we have asked; which particular ſpeciall faith, doth in a kinde of ſimilitude anſwer to the faith of miracles of old, whereby a man had a particular confidence; God would doe ſuch a miracle by him, ſo in and by meanes of prayer; in ſome things there may be a particular ſtrengthning and aſſuring the heart, that *God* will doe ſuch a thing for a man, which I confeſſe is rare and extraordinary; as alſo that immediate teſtimony concerning our perſons is, which many want that goe to heaven. And haply this other concerning the accompliſhment of ſpeciall mercies, is much more rare, and but in ſome buſineſſes; and is a thing which ſome men are not acquainted with, but yet may be in ſome caſes exiſtent to ſome mens ſpirits, as it was to *Davids* in the thing mentioned.

A caution, that herein a conditional evidence bee not taken for abſolute.

And concerning this alſo I will alſo adde a caution, as about the former, that it doth not alwayes fall out upon all ſuch kinde of evidences made to a mans ſpirit, and that by God, that the thing prayed for doth come to paſſe. For theſe very perſwaſions ſtirred up by *God*, may bee and are often but conditionall, though thus immediately made to a mans ſpirit, and are ſo to be underſtood, and not peremptory and abſolute, it cannot bee imagined that all theſe ſhould alwayes be of greater abſoluteneſſe & infallibility, than were many of thoſe revelations God made to the Prophets, wherein God manifeſted his gracious purpoſe towards ſuch a man or people, either to vouchſafe them ſuch a mercy, or bring ſuch a judgement, which though they

they were particular and expreſſe, yet limited and intended with a condition according to the performance, or not performance of wch it fell out, either the judgement expreſly threatned, was diverted, or that good thing which was as directed & fully promiſed, was not beſtowed: as it was in the caſe of *Ionas* threatning the deſtruction of *Nineveh*; and ſo in the promiſe concerning *Ely*'s houſe, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. *I ſaid indeed that thy houſe, and the houſe of thy Father ſhould walke before me for ever, but now the Lord ſayes, it ſhall not be ſo*, for they had broken the condition which was implyed in it; they had *deſpiſed the Lord, and them that deſpiſe me I will deſpiſe.* In like manner is Gods meaning expreſſed towards us too, in ſuch like perſwaſions wrought in us by praier to be underſtood, that ſuch mercies will ſurely come to paſſe; but ſtill under a condition of obedience, and performing of thoſe vowes, which a man joyned with thoſe his petitions, to move the Lord to grant the things; which if a man faile in, or ceaſeth to goe on to beleeve the promiſe, it may and doth often come to paſſe; that things fall out contrary to that perſwaſion, and then we are apt to queſtion whether it was from God or no; which it might be, and truly wrought by his Spirit; and yet not alwayes ſo abſolutely meant (that was your miſtake ſo to take it) but conditionally onely; for in ſuch great requeſts of the ſoule unto *God*, there uſe to paſſe mutuall covenants; and Indentures are drawne and ſealed unto by us; that is, we in prayer, offer and promiſe to doe thus and thus, if God will vouchſafe us ſuch a mercy, and pleade thus to *God* to move him to beſtow it; and *God* he thereupon

Chap. V.

CHAP. V.

on(it may be)ſeales a covenant on his part to grant the thing, and workes ſuch an undoubted perſwaſion; but if we in that *interim* of waiting for that mercy, doe deale falſely in that covenant which we made, and this whileſt we are yet in dependance upon *God* for it; whereby it appeares that we would have done ſo much more, after we ſhould have received it once; in this caſe *God* denyes the thing, and yet notwithſtanding, that perſwaſion and evidence was from *God* that heard the prayer. He ſaid indeed he would doe thus and thus for thee (as he told *David, I would have given thee much more*) becauſe thou ſaidſt to him, thou wouldeſt walke thus and thus, or didſt vow this or that to him; thou faileſt in thy word, upon which *God* uttered his; and thereupon ſayes *God*, as to *Ely, Now it ſhall not be ſo*, and yet *God* had ſpoken it afore, and not Satan, nor our owne hearts onely.

Sect. 5. When God puts a reſtleſſe importunity into the heart, to pray for a particular mercy.

4 When *God* doth put a reſtleſſe importunity into the heart; maugre all diſcouragements. So in that *Pſal.* 27.4. *One thing I have deſired, and I will ſeeke after it*; that is, as I have ſought it, ſo I will not leave ſeeking to *God* for it: when *God* maintaines this in the heart, it is a ſigne he heares, and will anſwer: for you know the Parable, that the *unjuſt Iudge* heard her for her *importunity*; therefore when God puts an importunity into the heart, hee meanes to heare.

A double importunity: one accepted, not the other.

Onely this likewiſe is to be added in this, there is a double importunity; one out of an inordinate deſire to a thing, whereby the heart knowes not how to bee without ſuch a mercy, and ſo continues to aske, but *asketh amiſſe*, and ſo *receives not*, *Iames* 5.

But

But when there is an importunity joyned with a subjection to *Gods* will which runs along with it, then *God* hath ſtird it up, and then looke for ſomething to come; otherwiſe you may be importunate, as *they ſeeke me daily*, when yet *God* heard not, *Iſay* 58.2. CHA. VI.

CHAP. 6.

Further Obſervations *to be made, on the diſpoſitions and carriage of our hearts,* after *Prayer: untill the iſſue of the thing prayed for.*

NExt: *after thou haſt prayed*, obſerve, what God doth towards thee. Sect. 1. When God gives an obedient dependant heart, in walking before him,

As firſt, how he doth guide thy feet and heart *after praying*, there is much in that; that which was the Spirit of ſupplication in a man when he praied, reſts upon him as the ſpirit of obedience in his courſe, ſo as that dependance he hath upon *God* for the mercy he ſeekes for, is a ſpeciall motive and meanes to keepe him fearefull of offending, and diligent in duty to looke to his paths, to walke and behave himſelfe as becomes a ſuiter, as well as to come and pray as a ſuiter. Thus *David* he walked by this principle, *Pſal.* 66.18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not heare me*: that conſideration ſtill came in as a curb unto ſin, and without this a man provokes *God*, and ſo caſts himſelfe behind-hand againe; and by ſinning, looſeth what ground he had got by praying. Therefore *David*, *Pſal.*

CHAP. VI

*Pſal.*145.8,9,10. when he was to pray, even as for his life, (as then it was, it being a deliverance from his enemies he ſought) he ſpecially prayes *God* to direct him and keepe him, that he might not ſinne againſt him; for he knew by ſinning he ſhould enervate and ſpoile all his prayers: not onely *heare me ſpeedily* (ſayes he) but alſo *Cauſe me to know the way wherein I ſhould walke; Teach me to doe thy will, leade me into the land of uprightneſſe*; this he eſpecially prayes for, for elſe he knew *God* would not heare him: therefore when thou art in treaty with *God* for any mercy, obſerve, doth *God* ſtill after praying keepe thee in a more obedient frame of ſpirit: it is a ſigne he intends to anſwer thee, as in like manner, when he keepes thee from uſing ill meanes, &c. As it was a ſigne he meant to give *David* the Kingdome, when he kept him innocent, and his heart tender, that it *ſmote* him but *for cutting off the lap of Sauls garment*: he was not ſo tender after. Therefore in *Pſal.*18. when he was delivered from all his enemies, he ſayes, *God dealt with him according to his uprightneſſe: for I kept my ſelfe from mine iniquity*: and *Pſal.* 119.157. *Many are mine enemies, yet doe I not decline from thy teſtimonies*; he kept his way, So 161. verſ. ſo alſo *Pſal.*27.11.

Sect. 2. When God gives a heart to waite for and expect the mercy.

2 When *God* after prayer ſtrengtheneth the heart to waite for the mercy. So *Pſal.*27. *ult. David* having prayed, ſayes to his ſoule, *waite on the Lord, be of good courage, and he will ſtrengthen thy heart.* Honeſt men, when they nouriſh hopes in one that is in dependance on them, who waiteth and is obſequious upon the hopes he hath of a ſute, uſe not to deny him: it were diſhoneſty in them to keepe

keepe men under hand, and fruſtrate their expectations; in like manner, when *God* keepes thy ſoule after praying in ſuch a dependant frame, looke for ſome good anſwer. And indeed when a man hath prayed long, in the end he begins to wait (as I may ſo ſay) *rather than pray* (though he pray ſtill) becauſe now he lookes *God* ſhould performe: before, and at firſt, he told the Lord he *deſired* it, but now he can with ſome boldneſſe tell him, that *he waites for it, and expects it.* Theſe two are both joyned, *Pſal.* 37. 34. *Waite on the Lord and keepe his wayes.* The *hope* of a godly man and his expectation *ſhould make him aſhamed* if it were not anſwered, therefore in this caſe anſwers uſe to come. CHA. VII

CHAP. 7.

Obſervations to be made after prayer, upon the iſſue *of what was prayed for: and firſt,* if accompliſhed: *whether as the fruit of prayers, or out of common providence: Helpes herein.*

WHen a man hath thus waited, and kept his way, then let him obſerve the iſſue and concluſion of what he ſought for, how things are caſt by *God.* Now of *neceſſity*, one of theſe two muſt fall out, that either the thing he deſired is *accompliſhed*, or *not accompliſhed*; and in either of theſe he may come to ſpie out anſwers to his prayers, for his prayers may be anſwered, though the thing be not done.

I meane to inſiſt ſeverally on theſe.

If

CHA. VII. Sect. 1. *God* sometimes answers the prayer fully in the way and manner desired

1 If the thing thou prayedst for doth come to passe, then what needst thou doubt of an answer, and whether *God* heard thee or no? For thou beholdest it with thine eyes; and so often it fals out, that as they prayed, so God doth grant according to the desires of a mans heart; and not only so, but *fulfils his counsell*, as it is, *Psal.* 20.4. that is, fulfils not onely his desire, and ayme of his prayer, but in that very way, by that very meanes, which his judgement and counsell pitcht upon in his owne thoughts. The *desire* of the heart may be satisfied, when God gives some other thing; but the *councell* of the heart is then fulfilled, when that which a man did himself look at, as that which was best for him, and hee is answered even in that particular, (for counsell is an act of the understanding, deliberating about meanes to an end, and directs to choose a particular meanes tending to an end:) so that as *Eliphaz* sayes to *Iob*, 13.22.27,28. A man makes a prayer to *God*, and he heares him, *and he decrees a thing, and brings it to passe*: that is, a man is guided to pitch upon such mercies in his prayers, as God makes good in particular: he sayes what he would have, and God performes it; and this priviledge thou shalt have (sayes *Eliphaz* there) if thou wilt turne to him, and be *acquainted with him*, and *receive the Law from his mouth*: thou shalt not erre in praying; but what thou settest upon to pray for, shall be accordingly granted to thee: he shall have the priviledge, *Fingere sibi fortunam*, in a right sense to bee his owne chooser and carver of his owne mercies; and as Christ said, *Be it according to thy faith*, so *God sayes* sometimes, *be it according to thy prayers*;

CHA. VII.

prayers; and whereas at other times prayers are answered obliquely, somtimes they be answered directly, wch is more comfortable, as direct beams are, and have more heate in them, then collaterall and oblique: and thus if a man wil heare and obey God, God will heare him: for if a man bee subject to *Christs Kingly Office*, his *Propheticall Office* shall guide him, and cause him not to erre in his Petitions; but by an unerring providence and preinstinct, infused by his spirit, God will so guide him, as to aske even that very thing which God intends to give: whereas of himselfe *he knowes not what* nor how to aske: so *David* asked long life, and *God gave it him, Psal.*21.2,3,4. God not only gave him his hearts desire, but the *request of his lips, V.*2. *Hannah* askt a sonne, and God answered her in the very thing she desired, and therefore she called him *Samuel*, 1 *Sam.*1.20. *Because* (sayes she) *I askt him of the Lord*, and *Verse* 27. *For this Childe I prayed* (and the Lord did not give another thing instead of it, but) *hath given me my Petition I asked of him.* So 1 *Chro.*4.10. is the like instance. And thus *God* often deales with his children, he answers them, even in the very things they aske. And to this end hath *God* given us his *Spirit*, and made *Christ wisdome unto us*; who knowes what is good for us, though we doe not, *Rom.*8. And therefore hath commanded us to spye out mercies for our selves, and then come to him for them; and to this end also hath made such particular promises of particular mercies, which he would have us have an eye unto in our prayers; all which is because ordinarily he bestowes the very things we aske.

And

CHAP. V. Yet our hearts are often jealous, whether it be an answer to prayer, or out of cõmon providence.

And yet because, although we have the very things we did aske and desire, yet such is the jealousie and infidelity of our hearts, that wee often discerne not, nor acknowledge that it was our prayers, that obtained them from God: but wee are apt when once we have them, either to looke but to things below, and the second causes of them; though before we did earnestly seeke them of God, or else still distrustfully to question whether or no it was at our prayers that he granted them, or out of common providence: Thus *Iob* in his distemper, *Iob* 9.16. professeth, that though he had *called, and God had answered him, yet* (sayes he) *I would not beleeve that he had hearkned to my voice*: that he did it in respect to my prayer and request, because he now deales so severely with me, *For he breaketh mee with a tempest, Vers.*17. And thus doe our distrustfull hearts (which are apt to bee unsatisfied with all the cleerest pledges of Gods favour, and still to misconster and pervert them,) and although God did answer us, upon our calling upon him, yet we will not beleeve that he hearkned to our prayer in it: therefore that you may be further inabled to discerne, how, and when things you prayed for, come in by prayer; I give you these further directions.

Sect. 2. Directions to help to discerne this.

1. From the manner of Gods performance: *God* discovers a more than ordinary hand of providence in things accomplisht by prayer: instanced and discovered in five particulars.

1 When God doth a thing in answer to prayers, he often doth it in such a manner, that his hand may be in a more than ordinary manner seene in it. There are few prayers, wherein a man hath sought God much; but in the answers of them God discovereth himselfe much; and turnes many great wheeles in the accomplishment of them; and *manifests* (as

David

David desires *God*, *Psal.* 17.7. to shew) *his marvellous loving kindnesse*; and indeed when *God* heares *prayers*, that have beene a long while a making, Hee shewes usually halfe a miracle one way or other. CHA. VII.

Now *God* discovers His immediate hand in the answers of *prayers* many wayes.

1 When Hee carries a thing through many difficulties, when there were a great many crosse wards in a businesse, thou hast *prayed* in, the least whereof would have kept the key from turning, and opening, when *God* shall make (as it were) a key on purpose to unlocke it, when *God* plots and contriues all the passages in a businesse thou diddest *pray* for, and so accomplisheth it; This is a signe, it is a fruit of *prayer*, and that *prayer* had beene a making that key all that while: So in bringing *David* to the Kingdome; *Ioseph* out of Prison; *Mordecai* to honour: and likewise *Saint Peter* out of prison, which was done at the *prayers* of the Church. *Acts* 12. He was sleeping betweene two Souldiers: if they had waked, hee had bin discovered: and he was in chaines, but they fall off, *vers.* 6, 7. And the keeper stood before the doore, but they mind him not, *vers.* 6. and when one watch is past, hee passeth quietly through another, *vers.* 10. and when both those were past, an Iron gate flyes open of its owne accord, *vers.* 10. Now such difficulties are there in many businesses, which yet are accomplisht by *prayer*: Iron chaines fall off, Iron gates, enemies hearts fly open of their owne accord, and though not in such a miraculous manner, by the meanes of an *Angell*, yet no lesse wonderfully. 1 By bringing it to passe through many difficulties.

CHA. VII.

Or secondly when *God* facilitates all meanes to accomplish the thing; which thou hast *prayd* for, so as all meanes doe in view conspire and combine in it, that thou hast winde and tyde, and a faire day, and all the way paved, or as *David* sayes, *hast thy way made plaine before thee*, and there fals out a great conjunction and meeting of many circumstances together, to effect it, which had influence into it, whereof if any one had beene wanting, happily the thing had not beene done; when the thing *prayed* for is thus granted, *prayer* then hath done it. Thus, when Hee delivered the people of *Israel* out of *Ægypt*, which was the accomplishment of their long desires and *prayers*, (*their cry came up* the Text sayes) how were all things facilitated! they that detained them doe themselves come and intreat them to goe out, *yea are urgent*, sayes the Text: and that at *midnight*: nay, hire them to goe out, with their eare-rings, and *Pharaoh* himselfe then parles lovingly and fairely with them, and desires their *prayers*. *Blesse me also*: Yea, to shew there was no resistance, the Text sayes, *a Dogge did not move his Tongue*: The bruit Creatures did not disturbe them, though at midnight, when those Creatures use to be most obstreperous through noyses.

Or secondly by facilitating all the meanes and causing them to conspire to accomplish it.

Ex. 12. 31, 33, 35. Verse 32.

3 When Hee doth it suddenly; and accomplisheth the thing thou hast long *prayed* for, ere thou art aware of it: as the returne of the Captivity of *Babylon*, which was the conclusion of many *prayers*, was done in a trice, *they were as men in a dreame*, *Psal.* 126. 1. they could scarce beleeve it was so, when it was done, it was because they had *sowen* many *prayers* which *came up* on the suddaine,

3 By bringing it to passe suddainely and unexpectedly.

verse

verſ. 5, 6. So *Peter*, he was faſt aſleepe, and did not ſo much as dreame of deliverance: So *Ioſephs* delivery out of priſon, and advancement to be the greateſt man in the Kingdome; the ſuddenneſſe ſhewed it was Gods remembring of him, and hearing his prayers. CHA. VII.

4 When God grants the thing with an overplus, above what we did aske, and caſteth many other mercies in together with that which we long prayed for; this alſo may be a ſigne God did heare our prayers in it: for when he doth heare indeed, he uſeth *to doe*, above what we did *aske or thinke*, thereby the more ſo to overcome the heart. So *David* asked *long-life*, & he gave him more than he asked, *Pſal.* 21. 2, 3, 4, 5. So *Salomon* he asked but *wiſdome*, and he gave him more than he asked, *Peace*, *Riches*, *Honour*, and all with it, 1 *Kings* 3. 12, 13. When prayers are anſwered, uſually mercies come thick, they come tumbling in; the thing wee praid for comes not alone: as when ſins are puniſhed, then miſeries alſo they come like armies in troupes upon us: as temptations likewiſe come together, and wee fall into many of them at once, as S. *Iames* ſpeakes. Thus doe mercies alſo. 4. By doing above what was deſired with addition of other mercies. 1 Iames 2.

5 When the thing is granted by prayers; there is often ſome particular circumſtance of providence concurrent with it, which is a token for good, and ſealeth to us that it is from God; ſuch often as a man may take notice of, and which others take notice of alſo. Therefore *Pſal.* 86. 17. *Shew mee a token for good, that others may ſee it and be aſhamed:* and ſuch tokens doth God often make ſmall circumſtances to be to us. Things ſmall in themſelves, 5 By adding ſome ſpeciall circumſtance as a token of Gods ſpeciall hand in it.

CHA. VII.

may be *magna indicia*, great signes and tokens: for example, *Moses* and *Aaron*, and the *Israelites* had long cried to *God* for the deliverance of his people, and laid up many prayers; *their cry came up*, as was said; and when God doth deliver you, what tokens were there of good, and of Gods hand in it, and of his answer to their prayers? The Text notes (as was observed before) that *a dog did not barke at their going out*, *Exod.* 11.7. which was a small circumstance, but it was *magnum indicium*, and so intended by *God*; for the Text addes, *That yee may know God puts a difference betweene the Israelites and the Egyptians.* This was a token of Gods hand, to over-rule the tongues of rude bruit creatures, that use to stir at such unusuall noises, and at travellers especially in the night. So when *Isaac*, as also *Abraham*, and his servant also, had prayed for a Wife for *Isaac*, see by what a token God shewed he had heard their prayers; *Rebekkah* was the first that came out to the servant, and if she be the woman appointed for *Isaac* (sayes the servant) *Let her offer me drinke, and my Camels also*: this was a small thing in appearance, but a great *indicium* of Gods hand in it, and therefore the servant bowed at it, and worshipped: and the signe in it selfe was such, as argued a good nature in her, and a kinde curteous disposition, which therefore it may be he singled out, as a token of a meet wife, as a thing especially to be looked at in the mariage choise.

Gen. 23.13.14.

Sect. 3. Observation from the time, wherein the thing prayed for is accomplisht, as,

Againe, the consideration of the *time*, wherein the things wee have asked, are granted, may much helpe us to discerne, whether it be in answer to our prayers. For God who doth all things *in weight*

weight and measure, shewes his *wisdome* and *love*, as much in the *season*, as in giving the thing it self. *God* considereth all times of thy life, and still chooseth the best and fittest to answer thy prayers in, *In an acceptable time have I heard thee*. So *Isay* 49.8. As *David* (likewise sayes) he prayed *in an acceptable time*, *Ps.* 69.13. So accordingly God answers in the best and most acceptable time to us; for he waits to be gracious, for *he is a God of judgement*, *Isay* 30.18. that is, Hee is a wise God that knowes the fittest times and seasons, wherein to shew kindnesse and his favours in. CHA. VII.

As first, it may be, that at that very time whē thou hast beene most instant and earnest, & even whilest thou art a praying, or presently after, the thing is done and accomplisht. To this purpose is that of *Isay* 65.24. That as sometimes *hee heares before they call* (which argues much love to give mercies unsought) so also, *whilest they are speaking*, *I will heare* and grant the thing, which argues no lesse love; and hee culs out that time on purpose, that they might rest assured, their prayer was answered. Thus to assure *Hezekiah* his prayer was heard, God sent the Prophet in to him whilest hee was a *praying* and *weeping*, with *his head turned towards the wall*. So *Isaac* going out to *pray* in the field, meetes his *Rebekkah* then a comming, that blessing of a good wife being surely then, the great request temporall he was in treaty with God for, this *Rebekkah* was the fruit of many prayers. So when S. *Peter* was in prison, the Church being gathered together, S. *Peter* comes and knocks *at the same houre*, *Acts* 12. from the 12. *vers.* to the 18.

Sometime the thing is accomplisht about the time wherein we are most instant in prayer.

Gen. 24.63.

CHA. VII. So as it often fals herein our, as to the Ruler in the Gospell, *Iohn* 4.52. who *inquiring* diligently, found *that the same houre that Christ had said to him, Thy Son liveth*, that *then he recovered*, and so hee beleeved, and his whole housholde. So also here, that sometimes the thing is done, or the newes of it comes the same houre, or soone after; wherein a man was praying about it, and happily then when the heart was most stirred about it, more than at any time else: this is a signe it was an answer of prayers, and may helpe to confirme a mans faith in it, as that also did his.

a When granted in the fittest time.

Or secondly, when it is the most acceptable and when every way the fittest time to have the thing granted. As [1] That time when thou *hadst most need*, and [2] When thy heart was *most fit for it*. For in answering prayers, God aimes especially at two things. [1] To *shew his mercy*, that a man might magnifie and exalt that. And [2] *To have the heart* satisfied and *filled with joy* and contentment in his answer; and the thing made sweet, and a mercy indeed to him: in briefe, that his *goodnesse might bee delighted in*, and *his mercy exalted*. And for these two purposes hee culs out a time, when wee have most need, to shew his mercy, and also when our hearts are most subdued, & our lusts are mortified and dead to it. For then we are fittest to relish his goodnesse alone in it, and not to be drawne away with the carnal sweetnesse that is in the thing. The one you have expresst, *Isay* 30.18. *He waites to be gracious to have his mercy exalted*. The second intimated *Iames* 5. *Ye aske and receive not, because ye aske amisse, to consume upon your lust*. Such prayers, whilest

The fittest time knowne two wayes.

whileſt the heart is in this temper, the Lord denies, or deferres in mercy till the heart be weaned. CHA. VII.

For the firſt of theſe: As, ſuppoſe thou didſt pray long for aſſurance of ſalvation, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt, and when thou hadſt moſt need of it; either when thy Spirit would have failed without it, as *Iſay* 57.16. Or againſt ſome great affliction approaching, or ſome great incounter with the world, for the Name of Chriſt, that then God filled thy heart with it, &c. that was the fitteſt time: now hath *God* heard thy prayer. As S. *Peter* he was in Priſon, and had beene ſo for many dayes, as appeares by the fourth and fifth verſes, *Acts* 12. And *God* could at any time have delivered him, of all that while the Church prayed for him, *v.* 5. But God kept him in on purpoſe, till that very night, when in the next morning *Herod* meant to bring him forth to execution, and then *God* delivered him at the prayers of the Church; then was the moſt fit time: As the *Pſalmiſt* ſayes, *The full time to have mercy on him was come.* And then to receive an anſwer, is aſigne God did it out of ſpeciall love, which love he *would have exalted by thee, Iſay* 30.18. 1 When we have moſt need. *Pſal.* 102. 13.

If 2. when thy heart was *moſt fit* for the mercy it was granted, thē art thou alſo heard in an acceptable time: for God doth not with-hold mercies from thoſe that are his, out of want of love; neither ſo much for what is paſt, as for the preſent evill diſpoſition of their hearts, whereby they are unfit: and in this ſenſe alſo may that be underſtoōd, that God *prepareth the heart* and *heareth the prayer, Pſal.* 10.17. 2 When the heart was beſt prepared to receive it, and moſt weaned from it.

CHA. VII. As first, when thy heart is most weaned from that temporall mercy (supposing it such) which thou hast granted thee upon seeking of it: So *David*, when had he the Kingdome in possession given him? then, when he was as a *weaned child*, and had his high thoughts (which happily at the first newes of it had risen in his minde) purged out, *Psal.* 131.2. *I have no high thoughts, &c.* sayes hee then; Thus, when thy heart had let all carnall ends go, & had betaken it self alone to God, for thy portion to be had alone out of him, and then the thing it selfe came to passe: This was the fittest season.

Object. But you will bee ready to say, to have a thing when my heart is taken off from it, and even contented not to have it, makes it to be no mercy: for where there is no desire, there is no rejoycing.

Answ. If thy desire bee taken off the thing then now thou wilt rejoyce the more in GOD; and though the thing of it selfe should now give the lesse satisfaction, yet God by the thing will give thee more, and hee will make it up; for thou shalt relish his love and sweetnesse in it now, which is *better than life*, and therefore much better than that thing which thou enjoyest; and indeed the violence of the desire before, would have made it lesse sweet: for the thing alone would not have filled and contented that desire, when it was an inordinate lust, and so thou wouldest have beene vexed with it, rather than satisfied, and found a greater vanity in it: but now when it is become a subordinate desire unto God, and that the desire is downe, and the heart quieted, and contented with God in the thing: the heart sayes as she said, *I have enough.*

So

So 2. likewiſe thou mayeſt have an affliction thou prayedſt long againſt taken off then, when thy heart was moſt willing to *accept thy puniſhment*, as *Moſes*'s phraſe is, and to ſubmit to GOD in it. CHA. VII *Lev.* 26. 41.

Sect. 4. A third ſort of obſervations from the anſwerable proportion, betweene Gods dealing in the accompliſhment of it, and our prayers.

A third thing you are to obſerve concerning the accompliſhment of the thing; whereby you may diſcerne, whether things are granted in anſwer to prayers, is; when thou ſeeſt *God* in his dealings with thee, and anſwering of thee, to deale in a kinde of proportion with thy manner of praying and ſeeking of him, and of walking with him, whileſt thou wert dependant on him, for ſuch or ſuch a mercy. And as you may ſee a proportion betweene ſins and puniſhments, which are the rewards of them, that you can ſay, ſuch a ſin brought forth this affliction, it is ſo like the Father: ſo you might ſee the like proportion, betweene your prayers, and your walking with God, and Gods anſwers to you, and his dealings with you. So did *David*, *Pſal.* 18. 24. *According to the cleaneneſſe of my hands hath hee recompenced me, &c.* His ſpeech notes ſome ſimilitude or likeneſſe; as for example, The more ends or carnall deſires you had in praying, and the more you mingled of theſe with your holy deſires, and the more want of zeale, fervency, &c. were found in your prayers, the more you ſhall (it may bee) finde ſome bitterneſſe mingled with the mercy, when it is granted, and ſo much imperfection, and want of comfort in it: So ſayes *David* in the ſame *Pſal. verſ.* 25. 26. *With the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe pure.* Pure prayers have pure bleſſings; *& è contra:* and againe, as you in praying ſometimes ſlackened

CHA. VIII slackened and grew cold, so you might see the busi-
nesse coole, and to be cast backward: as when *Mo-*
ses's hands were downe, Amalek prevailed; but
when they were *lifted up, Israel* had the better, *Ex-*
*od.*17.12. GOD let him see a proportion, which
argued his prayer was the meanes of prevailing.
A man findes in praying, his suite sticks, and goes
not on as he expected, and this because he gives not
so good a fee as he was wont, and doth not ply *God*,
and solicite him, but on the contrary, when he was
stirred up to pray then still he found things to goe
well; by this a man may clearely see, that God
did heare and regarded the prayer. Thus likewise
when a man sees hils and dales in a businesse, faire
hopes often, and then all dasht againe, and the
thing in the end brought to passe, let him look back
upon his prayers: didst not thou in like manner just
thus deale with *God*? That when thou hadst prayed
earnestly, and thought thou hadst carried it, then
dash all againe, by interposing some sin, and thus
againe and againe. Herein *God* would have you
observe a proportion; and it may helpe you dis-
cerne, how, and when they are answered, and ob-
tained by prayer; because *Gods* dealings therein
hold such a proportion with your prayers.

CHAP.

Chap. 8.

Seven Obſervations *more, from the* effects *which the accompliſhment of the* mercy *hath upon the* heart.

4 THou mayeſt diſcerne whether they be in anſwer to thy prayers, by *the effects* upon thy heart.

Sect. 7. If the thing obtained drawes the heart neerer to God, and to rejoyce in his favour in it, more han in the thing.

As 1. If the thing that is granted upon thy prayers, draw thy heart more in unto *God*, it is then certain, that it was granted as an anſwer to thy praiers. Things granted out of ordinary providence onely, doe increaſe our luſts, and are ſnares to us; as *Saul* gave *David* his daughter *Michol* to bee a ſnare to him: So *their full tables are made ſnares:* ſo GOD gave the *Iſraelites* their will, the things they deſired, but withall *gave them up to their luſts*, *Pſal.* 106.15. he gave them their requeſts, but ſent *leanneſſe into their ſoules*; the Quailes might fat ſome of their bodies, that ſurvived, yet their ſoules grew leane: there was a curſe upon their Spirits: this new delicate food made their bodies more luſtfull, they *did eate and drinke, and roſe up to play:* but things obtained by prayer are ſanctified to us: for every thing *is ſanctified by prayer*, ſo as it ſhall not inſnare nor intangle our hearts: a thing obtained by prayer, as it came from God; ſo a man will returne it to God, and uſe it for his glory: So *Hannah* having obtained *Samuel* by prayer; ſhe returnes him unto *God*, 1 *Sam.* 1.27.28. *For this childe I prayed, and God gave me my petition, and therefore alſo I have lent him*

Pſa. 69.22.

Exod. 32.6.

1 *Tim.* 4.5.

CHA. VIII

him to the Lord as long as he liveth. If therefore thou findeſt this his dealing with thee, in anſwering thee, to be a kindely motive to cauſe thee to mourne for ſin, and to be as a reſtraint againſt ſin; it is a ſigne it was the fruit of prayer. Thus it wrought with *David, Pſal.6.8. Away from me yee that worke iniquity: God hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

Alſo if thou rejoyceſt in GOD, more than in the thing obtained: ſo *Hannah* begins her ſong when ſhe bleſſeth *God* for her Childe; *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord, &c.* 1 *Sam.*2.1. She rejoyceth not ſo much in the gift, as in the giver; and his favour more in this, that her prayer was anſwered, then in the thing obtained: this is a ſigne of having obtained the mercy through prayers, when it is thus ſanctified unto a mans ſpirit.

Sect. 2. Prayer anſwered enlargeth the heart with thankfulneſſe.

2 Prayers anſwered will inlarge thy heart with thankfulneſſe, and thus uſually they doe; ſelfe-love makes us more forward to pray, than to give thankes; for nature is all of the craving and taking hand: but where grace is, there will be no eminent mercy gotten with much ſtruggling, but there will be a continued particular thankfull remembrance of it a long while after, with much inlargement: and *As prayers abounded, ſo will thankſgiving abound alſo. Hannah*, ſhe makes a Song, 1 *Sam.*1.2. Great bleſſings that are wonne with prayer, are worne with thankfulneſſe; ſuch a man will not aske new, but hee will withall give thankes for old. Thankefulneſſe, of all duties, proceeds from pure grace; therefore if the ſpirit ſtirs thee unto it, it is a ſigne he made the prayer: *What thankes ſhall I render*

tender to God, for the joy I have in you, saith S. *Paul*, 1 *Thes.* 3. 9, 10. So in all his other Epistles, all those he writes to, as he prayes for them, so he tels them, hee gives thankes for them, and for their graces which he had prayed for. And if answering prayers for others, makes S. *Paul* so thankfull, what when for himselfe? Prayer and thankes, are like the double motion of the lungs; the ayre that is sucked in by prayer, is breathed forth againe by thankes: is thy heart afresh inlarged, as to mourne for past sins long since committed, so in like manner, for past mercies won with long prayers; & this for a long while after? it is a signe that they were obtained by prayer. CHA. VIII

3 If the mercy obtained doth encourage thee to goe to *God* another time; to pray againe the more confidently and fervently; it is a signe thou hast got the former that way: For the *Holy Ghost* having once shewen thee the way, hence it is, thou art thus ready to take the same course another time. *Psal.* 116. 2. *The Lord hath heard me, and I will call on him as long as I live.* I know (sayes hee) now what course to take, if I be in any want, even to call upon him; and hee cals upon others to doe so too. Sect. 3. If this encourageth thee to goe to God againe.

4 When *God* having heard thy prayers upon solemne vowes made by thee, thy heart is made carefull to pay those vowes, which thou didst make in the time of thy suing to God for that mercy, this may be an argument to thee, the thing being granted, that thy prayer was heard. For first, it not onely argueth, that thy heart it selfe doth secretly make such an account, that upon them God did Sect. 4. It makes a man carefull to performe his vowes made in prayer, to obtaine it.

CHA. VIII did grant the thing, and thou doest therefore make conscience to returne them againe to God in service, as part of thy Indentures made with him; and as an homage due, and an acknowledgement for ever, that such a mercy was won by prayer; and by this preserveſt the memory of the receit of that mercy; for vowes are of the nature of homage: and secondly, in this also it is an evidence, that the thing was obtained by prayer, in that *God* cals for those vowes from thee, by his spirit in thy heart, and stirres thee up to performe them; it argues he in relation to thy prayers answered, takes them as dues from thee, that he having dispatcht thy suite, now cals for what was agreed to be given him whē it should be performed. And thirdly, in that also he doth accept these thy vowes of thee, he acknowledgeth that thy vowes and prayers are heard: as *Manoah* said in another case, *If he meant to have destroyed us, he would not have accepted a sacrifice*; so in this case it may bee said, if *God* had not heard thy prayers, he would not have accepted thy vowes after thy praying. Thus *David*, *Psal.66.13,14. I will pay thee my vowes, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in my trouble*; the reason followes, v.17.19. because that *Verily God hath heard me, whē I cried to him; & so Eliphas in Iob* doth connect and hang these two together, *Iob 22.27. Thou shalt make thy prayer to him, & he shall here thee, and thou shalt pay thy vowes*: this which he speakes of paying his vowes, was not onely as it was to bee his duty, but also as a consequent that would follow the other; that when his prayers should be heard, he thereupon would performe his vowes:

Judg.13.23.

for

for his scope is to move *Iob* to turne to *God*, shewing what benefit would accrue to him by it, and amongst others this. The hearing his prayers, and performing his vowes. CHA. VIII

5 When thou art inabled by faith, to see cleerely *Gods* hand shewed forth, in the attaining of that mercy over and above the power of second causes, and to acknowledge it to his glory; for the truth is, one maine cavilling reason in our blinde hearts, whereby we are usually hindred and put by from apprehending our prayers to bee answered, when yet the thing is done, we shall finde to bee; that our minde and eyes are terminated and bounded in second causes, and not raised to see Gods hand in the thing: therefore on the contrary, when *God* inableth thee to see that *God* he hath done thee this kindnesse, so as thy minde is cleere in it, that it is God that hath done it; *Gods* purpose and the end hereof is, that he would have thee take notice, that he had a respect to thy prayers; and this you will usually finde to be true, that *so much faith and dependance* as you had upon *God in prayer*, for the obtaining of a mercy, *so much faith and acknowledgement you will have in the accomplishment of it.* Parallell with this rule is that other, which in another case is usually given, that in performance of duties, so much as the soule did goe out of it selfe to *God*, for strength to performe them, so much, when they are performed, will the heart acknowledge *Gods* assistance, and be humbled; and this is a signe of prayer being heard, upon this ground, because *Gods* end of hearing prayers is, that *we might glorifie him.* So *Psal.* 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble*

5 If a man sees by faith, & acknowledgeth *Gods* sole hand in the accomplishment.

Cha. VIII

trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie mee. Therefore when the heart hath prayed much for a mercy, with dependance before the obtaining of it, and then is enabled to exalt God when it is obtained; then it is a ſigne that *God* did it in relation to thy prayer. For there is that connexion made betweene theſe, as betweene the cauſe and the effect, *I will heare thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me. David,* when he was delivered out of all his troubles, (as when he made that 18. *Pſal.* he was, as appeares by the title of it) then at the 6. verſe, he ſhewes how hee had prayed, and how hee was heard; and ſee thereupon how his heart was enlarged to acknowledge *God* alone to have done all, in the reſt of that Pſalme; ſo from the 27. and alſo from the 31. ver. When we ſee Angels from God, beyond the power of ſecond cauſes deſcending; it is a ſigne, that prayers, as Angels firſt aſcended, and obtained that mercy. Thus alſo the Church *Eſay* 26. having obtained thoſe deliverances by prayer, ver. 17. (for which there ſhe makes that ſong by way of thankfulneſſe) ſhe aſcribes all unto *God,* verſ. 12. *Thou haſt wrought all our workes for us,* and *verſ.* 18. *Verily wee have not wrought any deliverance in the earth.*

Sect. 6. With the mercy, ſometimes a ſpeciall evidence comes in that it is obtained by prayer.

6 When with the mercy there commeth the aſſurance of Gods love, and an evidence of his favour, when *God* ſends not a bare token onely, but a letter alſo with it, to beare witneſſe of his love, in wch the token is wrapt. I need not make that a ſigne; for when this comes with a mercy, it carries its owne evidence, you will know well enough that it is the fruit of prayer.

Laſtly,

CHA. VIII. Sect. 7. By the event things obtained by prayer, prove reall and stable mercies

7 Lastly, it will be evident by the *event*; things obtained by prayer have few thornes in them, the curse is taken out, but what comes but by ordinary providence, comes as it were up of it selfe alone; and like the earth untilled, is full of thornes, and briers, and many vexations: The reason is, for what comes in by prayer comes as a blessing, and *so no sorrow is added to it*, and also becauſe prayer killeth the inordinate lusts to a thing, which is the cause of vanity and vexation that is in the things enjoyed. *But when the blessing of God maketh rich, hee addeth no sorrow with it*, *Prov.* 10.22. Things long deferred, at last obtained by prayer, prove most comfortable, and in a setled manner such, they prove standing and stable blessings; and what trouble the heart was put to in the deferring, it is recompenced by the more setled constant immixt sweetnesse in the enioying it; prayer having long perfumed it, and the thing being steeped therein, it proves exceeding pleasant. So *Prov.* 13.12. *Hope deferred, makes the heart sick, but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life*, and heales that sicknesse, and comforts the heart much. Thus *Isaac* found *Rebekkah* a great blessing, & a comfortable wife to him, *Gen.* 24. *ult.* Such a comfort also was *Isaac* to *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17.18,19. *A sonne* indeed, *a son of laughter*, as his name signifies, being a joy to him: and such was *Samuel* to *Hannah*, she had not onely a son of him, but a good son, a blessed son, a Prophet, and the Iudge of the people of GOD: whereas *Iacob* getting the blessing, but without prayer, how imbittered was it to him, (though a blessing to him in the event) by twenty yeeres ba-

CHAP. IX

nishment from his fathers house? when *Israel* themselves set up a King, but not *by me*, as GOD sayes, what a punishment was he to them? *given in wrath, and taken away in anger: Hos.* 13.11.

CHAP. 9.

Considerations to quiet the heart, and to help it to discerne an answer to and acceptation of the prayer when the thing is not accomplisht.

Sect. 1. The thing prayed for is not alwayes granted when yet the prayer is heard.

BVt now the next and more difficult question is, when the thing is not granted, how shall wee then discerne and know, that God doth notwithstanding heare the prayer?

Concerning which, I must premise this, that it is true, that alwaies the very thing it selfe desired is not granted, when yet the prayer is heard. CHRIST prayed, *the Cup might passe from Him*, which though some interpret the word *passing*, for the short continuance of the brunt, and that therefore in that respect he was heard directly in what he asked: yet if so, why was that clause *if it be possible*, added; that argues his petition was for a totall removall, yet with subjection to Gods will, for hee knew there was no great impossibility in a short removall of it: nay it was impossible but that it should passe, *Acts* 2.24. but howsoever, it is plaine in *Moses*, about his going into *Canaan*: *Deut.* 3.26. *I besought the Lord*, sayes he *vers.* 23. *and He was angry with me, and would not heare mee, verse* 26. Likewise

ere

ere I come to resolve the case, an objection is also to be remooved, which is; CHAP. IX

That if the spirit of GOD make every faithfull *prayer* in us, *Rom.* 8.26. it is said Hee doth, *we know not what to pray for, but the spirit helpeth our infirmities*, &c. And he *searcheth the deepe things of* GOD, as it is said, 1 *Cor.* 2. Hee therefore knowing that *God* will not grant such a thing, you may therefore thinke that hee should not stirre up the heart to pray for such a thing God meanes to deny, but alwayes guide the heart aright, and not let us erre or misse in the things we *pray* for. To this, this in briefe is to be said by way of Answer.

An Objection answered: That though the Spirit knowes Gods mind, and teacheth us what to pray for, yet the thing prayed for may not be granted.

1 That the spirit makes not *prayers* in us, alwayes according to what Gods secret will and foreknowledge is, but according to His revealed will to us, both in His Word, and in His providence, as things therein are presented to us, and doe lie before our view, and so not alwayes according to what he meanes to doe, but according to what it is our duty to pray most for: for hee concurres to assist us to *pray*, as Hee doth in *preaching* or using other such like meanes, and Ordinances, wherein though the spirit knowes whom GOD meanes to convert, whom not, yet Hee assists us Ministers in our spirits often times as much to *preach* to those Hee meanes not to convert, as to those Hee meanes to convert: He dealing with us therein according to what is our duty, not according to what is His decree.

Againe, secondly, that phrase helpes to answer this, namely when He is said to *helpe our infirmities*, and therefore not according to his owne vast know-

CHA. IX.

ledge, doth he frame our *prayers*, but so, as He applies His assistance to our infirme, weake, and narrow apprehensions, and stirres up desires in us to such things, as according to our knowledge we are in duty to conceive, and which by all wee can see, by what is afore us revealed in His providence, thinke to bee most for our good, and His glory, and God accepts such *desires as from us*, but yet *doth for us* according to the largenesse of His owne love.

Sect. 2. A mistake to pray absolutely for such blessings as are not absolutely promised.

And so now to come to the case propounded, and therein unto helpes to pacifie, and direct the heart, about those *prayers*, at which the things are not granted.

And first how didst thou frame that *prayer* for that thing which is denyed thee? Didst thou *pray* for it absolutely, and peremptorily as simply best for thee? thou must not then thinke much, if such a *prayer* bee denied, for therein thou wentest beyond thy commission: but if thou didst *pray* for it conditionally, and with an (if) as *Christ* did, *if it bee possible* (which instance is a strong ground for such kind of *prayers*) and, *not my will, but thy will be done*, so, as thou didst referre it unto, and trust *Gods* judgment in the thing, and not thine owne, onely didst put him in mind as thy duty was, of what was represented to thee as best for thee in view, and so left it to him to cast, and didst referre it to His will and wisedome: Then thy *prayer* may be most fully answered and heard, and yet the thing denyed, and thou art to interpret, and take Gods meaning and mind revealed in the event in the best sense, which way soever it falls; for otherwise, CHRIST had not beene heard, when yet, the Text sayes, *Hee was heard*

In which when we are denied wee are to rest in Gods judgment as best for us and so interpret the prayer answered.

heard in all hee feared, Hebr. 5. 7.

CHAP. IX. Sect. 3.

There may be a reservation in the denyall, for some greater mercy.

2 Observe, if there were not a reservation in that denyall, for some greater and further mercy, whereof that deniall was the foundation: [1] oftentimes some great crosse is prevented, by the deniall of a thing, which we were urgent for: if we had had many of our desires, wee had beene undone: So it was a mercy to *David*, that his Childe was taken away, for whose life hee was yet so earnest, who would have beene but a living monument of his shame. It was also a mercy to *David*, that *Absalom* was taken away, whom surely he *prayed* much for, for he loved him much: who if he had lived, might have beene the ruine of him and his house. As a wicked mans deliverance and the granting his request layes a foundation, and is a reservation of him to a worse Iudgement: So, the deniall of a Godly mans *prayer* is for his greater good, and is laid as a foundation of a greater mercy: [2] And againe, oftentimes the very deniall breakes a mans heart, and brings him neerer to God, puts him upon searching into his wayes, and estate, and in his *prayers* to see what should bee amisse therein, which alone is a great mercy; and better then the thing, seeing by the losse of that one thing he learnes how to *pray* better, and so to obtaine an hundred better things afterward. CHRIST desired *the Cup might passe*, it did not; and that was the foundation of our salvation, and that was His glory, He beeing to passe through that suffering into His glory: The woman that had the bloudy issue, though she used many meanes, and happily *prayers* among the rest, and all in vaine, yet none tooke effect; that in the

CHAP. IX

Sect. 4. There may be a transmutation of the thing denyed into some other blessing that is better of the same kind.

end shee might come to *Christ*, and have both body and soule healed at once.

3 Observe, if there be not a *transmutation* and a *translation* or turning of the thing desired into some other greater blessing of the same kinde: for God (*all whose wayes are mercy and truth to His people*) doth improove, husband, and lay out the precious stockes of their prayers, to the best advantage, in things, whereby the greatest returnes and gaines may accrue: as old *Iacob* changed his hands, and layd the right hand upon the younger Son: So often doth GOD take off his hand of blessing from the thing we *prayed* for, and layes and discovers it in another more for our good: and as GOD giving *Isaac*, the power and priviledge to blesse a son, though *Isaac* he intended it for *Esau*, yet *God* unbeknowen to him transmitted it to *Iacob*, yet so, as the blessing was not lost: Thus is it in our *prayers* for blessings both upon our selves and others. There is often a *Transmutation*: Never a frustration of them: which may as truely and directly be called an answer to the *prayer*: As a factor beyond Sea, when the owner sends for such and such commodities, supposing them more vendible and advantagious, but if the Factor knowing the state of things, and the prices, sends him over in stead of them such, as shall sell better, and bring in more profit: may not hee bee said to answer his letters? and that better, then if he had sent those very commodities hee writ for? Thus *Abrahams prayers* for *Ishmael* were turned for *Isaac*: *Davids* for the Child to *Salomon*.

4 Observe if in the end *God* doth not answer thee

thee ſtill according to the *ground* of thy prayer; that is, ſee if that holy end, intention, and affection, which thou hadſt in prayer, be not in the end fully ſatisfied, though not in the thing thou didſt deſire: for *God* anſwers, *Secundum cardinem*, according to the hinge which the prayer turnes upon. As when a Generall is ſent out with an Army, by a King or a State, who give him many particular directions, how to order and diſpoſe, and manage the war, although in many particulars that fall out, wherein they could not foreſee to give ſo punctuall & particular directions, he ſwerve from the directions, yet if he keepes to the intent of their Commiſſion, and doth what is moſt advantagious for their ends, he may be ſaid to keepe to his Commiſſion, though he ſwerve from it in many particulars. For as they ſay of the Law, *Mens legis eſt lex*, the minde of the Law, is the Law, not the bare words it is printed in: ſo the *Meaning of the Spirit* is the prayer, *Rom.* 8.27. and not ſimply the things deſired: wherin we expreſſe thoſe our deſires: but ſtill the meaning, the intent, the ground of our prayers ſhall bee anſwered. To open this, the maine ends, and meanings of our hearts in our requeſts are *Gods* glory, the Churches good, and our owne particular comfort and happineſſe: we can deſire but comfort, and a man looketh out, and ſpyeth out ſuch a particular mercy, which he thinketh tends much to *Gods* glory, and his happineſſe, and yet that thing is denyed; yet notwithſtanding God will anſwer him, according to the meaning of his prayers, his glory ſhall certainly be advanced, even for that prayer of his ſome other way, and his comfort made up,

CHAP. IX. Sect. 5. God anſwers to the ground of our prayers.

CHAP. IX.

which is the common desire of all mankinde: and thou canst have but comfort, let the thing be what it will that conveighs it to thee; and *God* will take order that that comfort thy soule desired, thou shalt have it come in one way or other, which when it doth, thou canst not but say thy prayers are heard. For as *God* fulfils his promises, so he heares prayers, there is the same reason of both: now GOD hath promised, *He that leaves Father and Mother, shall have an hundred fold*: not, *in specie* as we say, *in kinde*; this cannot alwayes be fulfilled, for an hundred Fathers hee cannot have. God fulfils it not therefore alwayes in the same kinde, but yet in some other things, which shall bee more than a hundred Fathers would bee to thee.

Moses hee *prayes* hee might goe into *Canaan*, *God* answers the ground of his *prayer*, though not in the matter in it expressed and desired, and that both for *Moses* his comfort and his owne glory; for he takes him up to heaven, the true *Canaan*, whereof that *Canaan* was but a type, and hee appoints *Iosua* a fresh and a young man, comming on into the world and one whom *Moses* himselfe had tutored and brought up, and was his pupill, servant and attendant, *Num.* 6. 11, 28. and this was more for *Gods* glory, for *Iosua* was therein to bee the type of CHRIST leading us to heaven, which the law (of which *Moses* was the type) could not bring us unto by *reason of the weakenesse* of it, and he being young did it better; and it was not so much also for *Gods* glory, that one man should doe all; and whereas *Moses* desired to have the honour of it; in that his servant that attended him, and had beene

brought

brought up by him, and had all from him, that he was the man should do it, was well-nigh as great an honour to *Moses*: as if he had been the leader himselfe. And so *David*, when he desired to build the Temple and an house to *God*, for the like reasons *God* denyed it, but yet honoured him to prepare the materialls and to draw the patterne, and in that his Sonne did it, who was therein also the like type of CHRIST, being a *Prince of peace*, but *David* a man of bloud and warre: and likewise *God* accepted this of *David*, as if he had built it, and will recompence him as much: CHAP. IX.

5 Observe, if in the thing which thou hast prayed much about, though it be denied thee, yet if God doth not endeavour to give thee (as I may so speak) all satisfaction that may be, even as if he were tender of denying thee; and therefore doth much in it for thy prayers sake, though the conclusion proves otherwise, as being against some other purpose of his, for some other ends: As when he denied *Moses* to goe into the Land of *Canaan*, hee did it with much respect (as I may so speake, with reverence) to *Moses*: he yeelded as far as might be, for he let him leade them, till he should come to the very borders; and he let him see that good Land, carrying him up to an hill, and (as it is thought) by a miracle, inabled his sight to view the whole Land; and the man he chose to performe this worke, was his servant, which was a great honour to *Moses*; that one brought up by him shold succeed him. So whē *Abraham* prayed for *Ishmael, Oh let Ishmael live in thy sight, Gen.* 17.18. God went as far in granting his request as might be; for, sayes he, ver. 20. Sect. 6. God when he denies, yet sometimes yeeldes far in it, to give satisfaction to his childe.

CHAP. IX

I have heard thee, and I have blessed him, and *I will make him fruitfull, and multiply him exceedingly, and he shall beget twelve Princes; but my covenant, I will establish* that *with Isaac*. So likewise, when in casting that thing, thou didst seeke at his hands, when he shewes an extraordinary hand in turning it; it is a signe hee had a respect to thee, that hee would vouchsafe to discover his hand so much in it; let the thing fall which way it will which thou hast prayed for, if Gods hand appeare much in it, thou mayest comfortably conclude, that there is some great thing in it, and that prayer did that miracle in it, to dispose it so; and that there is some great reason why he denyes thee, and yet shewes his great respect to thy prayers, in that he is pleased to discover so extraordinary a providence about it.

Sect. 7. Observe the effects that denials have upon the heart. As first, if a man doth acknowledge God righteous in it, &c.

Lastly, looke into the effect of that deniall upon thine owne heart; as,

1 If thy heart be inlarged to acknowledge *God*, to be holy and righteous in his dealings with thee, and thine owne unworthinesse, the cause of his denying thee. Thus we often finde the Saints expressing themselves in their prayers: that *Psal.* 22. though typically made of Christ; yet as it was penned by *David*, and as it may concerne his person, it may serve for an instance for this, *I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not*, this might have made him jealous of God; but sayes he, *Thou art holy, &c.* and dealest now with me in an holy manner, and art just in it: *others have called on thee*, and have beene heard, though I now for my unworthinesse am denied. *But I am a worme.* It might have

put

put a man off, when he ſhall thinke, others are heard, and not I; but it puts not him off, but humbles him, *I am a worme, &c.* And *Thou art holy.* CHAP. IX

2 If God fill thy heart with an holy contentment in the deniall; if he ſpeake to thy heart, as he did to *Moſes*, when he denied him, *Deut.* 3. *Let it ſuffice thee*; and if as to S. *Paul*, when he was ſo earneſt about removing that buffeting, if thou getteſt but ſuch an anſwer as that to him, *My grace is ſufficient*; or that ſome ſuch conſideration is dropt in that ſtayes thee: it was the effect of *Davids* ſeven dayes faſting, that he did ſo contentedly beare the loſſe of the childe, which his ſervants thought would have overwhelmed him, 2 *Sam.* 12.19.20. 21. But a conſideration was dropt in, which was the fruit of his prayer, *That he ſhould goe to him, not hee returne hither*, and his minde was comforted thereby; in ſo much, as it is ſaid, *verſ.* 24. *That he comforted Bathſheba alſo.* Secondly, if God fill the heart with a holy contentment in the deniall.

If thou canſt bee thankfull to *God* out of faith, that GOD hath caſt and ordered all for the beſt, though hee hath denied thee, and although thou ſeeſt no reaſon, but that the thing prayed for, would have beene for the beſt, yet art thankfull upon the denyall of it, out of faith reſting in *Gods* judgement in it. As *David*, in all thoſe foremen-tioned places was, *Thou art holy, that inhabiteſt the prayſes of Iſrael*; he prayſes God for all this: *David* before he did eate, after his ſeven dayes faſting for the childe, aroſe, *And went firſt into the Temple and worſhipped.* 2 *Sam.* 12.20. and what worſhip it was, appeares by his *anointing* himſelfe & *changing his raiment*, which was in token of rejoycing Thirdly, if the heart be thankful out of faith, when denied.

and

CHAP. IX.

and thankes, and it fell out to him according to his faith, for presently after, *Salomon* was begotten, *vers.* 24.

Sect. 4. If the heart be not discouraged, for continuing still to pray for other things.

If thou canst pray still and giveſt not over, although thou ſtandeſt for mercies which thou miſſeſt; if when thou haſt mercies granted, thou feareſt moſt; and when denied, loveſt moſt, and art not diſcouraged, thy prayers are heard, *Pſal.* 80. 4. Though *God* ſeemed angry with their prayers, yet they pray, and expoſtulate with him, and give not over, for they made that Pſalme as a prayer, *How long wilt thou be angry againſt the prayer of thy people.* So *Pſal.* 44. 17. *Though we are caſt among Dragons, yet we have not beene falſe in thy Covenant.* So ſay thou, I will pray ſtill, though I never have an anſwer in this life. It moves ingenious natures to ſee men take repulſes and denials well, which proud perſons will not doe; and ſo it moves *God.*

CHAP. 10.

Application: *A* reproofe *of thoſe that pray, but looke not after the returne of their prayers: The* cauſes *of this neglect.*

A reproofe of thoſe that pray, but look not after the returne of their prayers.

IS to reprove thoſe, who put up prayers, and are earneſt in begging, but looke not after them when they have done, no more than if they had not prayed: who ſtill venture, and have a great ſtock of prayers going, but looke not after the returnes that are made, caſt not up their commings

in

in and gainings by prayers, and when they have prayed, ſit downe diſcouraged; as not making account in earneſt that ever they ſhall heare of their prayers againe, even as if they had beene but as words caſt away: *as beating the ayre; as bread caſt upon the waters*, which ſincks or is carried away, and they finde it no more: but herein you deſpiſe *Gods* Ordinance, and *erre, not knowing the power of prayers*; and yee contemne the Lord; but you will ſay as they in the Prophet ſaid, *Wherein doe we in this contemne him?* Why, if you askt a man a queſtion, and when you had done did turne your back upon him; as ſcoffing *Pilate* askt in ſcorne of Chriſt, *What is truth?* but would not ſtay for an anſwer, did you not contemne him? as not to anſwer when a queſtion is asked you, is contempt; ſo not to regard the anſwer made, when you have beene earneſt in begging, is no leſſe contempt alſo: if you had writ letters to a very friend about important buſineſſe, and had earneſtly ſolicited him for an anſwer, & he were carefull in due time to ſend one, if wee ſhould make account to heare of him no more; ſhould we not wrong him in our thoughts? Or if he did write, if we ſhould not vouchſafe to reade over his anſwer, were it not a contempt of him? ſo is it here, when you have beene earneſt with God for bleſſings, and regard not the anſwer: and becauſe verily this is a fault amongſt us, I will therefore endeavour to diſcover to you the cauſes and diſcouragements, which though they keepe you not from praying, yet from this earneſt expectation, and reall and true making account to have anſwers of your prayers; onely my ſcope is, not to ſhew

CHAP. IX

The cauſes of this neglect, are of two ſor

CHAP. X.

ſhew you ſo much the reaſons, why *God* denyes you many requeſts, as why even in your owne hearts you are diſcouraged after you have prayed, as if they would not be anſwered, although God doth anſwer them. Theſe diſcouragements are partly temptations, partly ſinfull impediments, wherein we are more faulty.

1 Temptations, want of aſſurance that your perſons are not accepted, becauſe your prayers are not

1 Becauſe your aſſurance that your perſons are accepted, is weake; therefore your confidence that your prayers are heard, is weake alſo: For as *God* doth firſt accept the perſon, and then our prayers; ſo the beliefe that *God* doth accept our perſons is that which alſo upholds our hearts in confidence that our prayers ſhall bee granted: this you may finde in 1 *Iohn* 5.13,14,15. Firſt, in the 13. *Verſe* he ſayes. *Theſe things have I written to you, that ye may know you have eternall life*: and upon that aſſurance this will follow, *Verſ.* 14,15. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heares us, &c. And if we know he heares us, we know we have the petitions we deſired of him*: marke how he linkes theſe three together, as effects and conſequences each of other. *Theſe things I write unto you, that you may be aſſured*, that life and heaven is yours, as in 12. and 13. *Verſes*. and upon that 2. this confidence will follow in your hearts, *That God heares you*, that is, that you have his eares open to you, and heart enlarged towards you: and then 3. if you be aſſured that *God* heares you, then from this wil follow an aſſurance, that *You ſhall have any thing granted* you deſire; yea, and he makes this one of the maine and immediate effects of aſſurance of juſtificatjon; therefore

hee

he ſayes, this is the *confidence* that we have in him; that is, this effect there is of this confidence; for whereas they might ſay, what benefit will accrue to us by this aſſurance? why this ſayes he, which is one of the great and maine priviledges of a Chriſtian, even aſſurance that *God* will heare him; and not onely ſo, but grant him all his prayers. And he may have that confidence in him, that he will; for when a man is aſſured God hath given him his Son, he will then eaſily be induced to beleeve and expect, *How ſhall he not with him give me all things? Rom.*8.32. If once he lookes upon God as a Father, hee will then eaſily conceive that which Chriſt ſayes, *If Fathers that are evill can give good things to their Children, how much more ſhall not your Father, give his ſpirit, & all good things* to them that aske them: and if he gave his Sonne, when we did not pray to him, how much more ſhal he not with him give us all things we pray for? If a man comes to ſue to any man of whom he knew not whether he loved him or not, he would have ſmall hope or expectation of having his ſuite granted, though he came againe and againe; but if hee be aſſured he is in favour with him, according to the degree of favour, he ſuppoſeth himſelfe to ſtand in with him, he is aſſured and confident of obtaining his requeſt. CHAP. X.

2 Diſcouragement is the weakeneſſe of their prayers: though a man thinkes his perſon is accepted, yet alas ſayes he, my prayers are ſo poore and weake, as ſurely *God* will never regard them. To remove which, let me firſt aske thee this queſtion: Doeſt thou pray with all thy might? then though that

2 Of the weakneſſe of our prayers: which is anſwered by three things.

CHAP. X.

that thy might bee weake in it ſelfe, and in thine owne apprehenſion ſuch, yet becauſe it is all the might which thou haſt, and which grace hath in thee, it ſhall be accepted. *For God accepts according to what a man hath*, 2. *Cor.* 8. 12. *and not according to that hee hath not.*

2. Thou art to conſider that God doth not heare thee for thy praiers ſake, though not without them; but *for his names ſake*, and his *ſonnes ſake*, and becauſe thou art his child, as the mother when her child cries (ſuppoſe it bee a weake child) doth not neglect to heare and relieve it; becauſe it doth cry more lowder, but tenders it becauſe it cries, and pitties it the more the weaker it is.

3. Againe, though the performance in it ſelfe bee weake, yet conſidered as a prayer, it may bee ſtrong, becauſe a weake prayer may ſet the ſtrong God a worke; as faith for the act of it, as produced by us may be weake, yet becauſe its object is Chriſt, therefore it juſtifies, ſo is it in prayer; it prevailes not, becauſe of the performaunce it ſelfe, but becauſe of the name, which it is put up in, even *Chriſts name*, and therefore as a weake faith juſtifies, ſo a weake prayer prevailes as well as a ſtronger; and both for the like reaſon in both, for faith attributes all to GOD, and ſo doth prayer, for as faith is meerely a receiving grace, ſo prayer a begging grace, and therefore doſt thou thinke thy prayers are accepted at all, notwithſtanding their weakenes? if that they are accepted, then they muſt bee accepted as prayers, now if they bee accepted as prayers, then as effectuall motives to prevaile with him to graunt the thing you aske; for if hee ſhould not

not accept them to that end, for which they were ordained, it is as if he accepted them not at all. As therefore when he approves of any mans faith as true and sincere, hee approves and accepts of it to that purpose, for which it was ordained, which is to save and justifie, and to this end doth as fully accept the weakest act of faith, as the strongest; so is it with the prayers, which being ordayned as a means to obtaine mercies from him, if hee accepts them at all, it is with relation to the accomplishment of them, which is their end. CHAP. X.

4. Men are mistaken in judging of the weakenes of prayers, they judge of the weakenes of their prayers by their expressions, and gifts in performing them, or by the stirring and overflowe of affections, whereas the strength and vigor of prayer should bee estimated from the faith, the sinceritie, the obedience, the desires expreſt in it. As it is not the lowdnesse of a preachers voice, but the weight and holynesse of the matter, and spirit of the Preacher, that moves a wise, and an intelligent hearer; so not gifts, but graces in prayers are they that move the Lord: the strength of prayer lies not in words, but in that it is fitted to prevaile with God, one prayer is not more strong then another, further then it is so framed as it hath power with God more or lesse, as of *Iacob* it is said *hee had power with God, Hos.* 12. Now prayers move God, not as an Oratour moves his hearers, but as a child moves his father: two words of a child humbled, and crying at his fathers feete, will prevaile more then penned orations. *Rom.* 8. It is *the meaning of the spirit*, that God lookes unto, more then the expressions:

CHAP. X.

ons: for the *groanes* there are laid to be *unutterable*, *Hezechiahs* expreſſions were ſo rude and broken; that hee ſayes, *Eſay* 38. 14. that hee did but *chatter*, hee being then ſicke, even *as a crane*, yet GOD heard them.

3. So often failings of anſwers: anſwered by 4. things.

A third diſcouragement is faylings of anſwers; I have prayed often and long, and I have beene ſeldome or never anſwered, and therefore I make little account of my prayers, that they are heard: others have the revenewes of your prayers comming in, but I doe miſſe whatſoever almoſt I ſtand for; therefore ſay they as thoſe, *why have wee faſted, and thou regardeſt it not: Iſay* 58. 3.

To remove this conſider, 1. that thou haſt the more reaſon to waite, for thou haſt the more anſweres to come; for as wicked men *treaſure up wrath*, ſo doe godly men mercy, and eſpecially by their prayers, and therefore mercies, and anſweres doe often come thicke together, even as afflictions alſo doe.

Suppoſe thou haſt few anſweres, concerning the thing thou ſeekeſt for here, either in praying for thy ſelfe or others, yet *thy reward is with the Lord*. It is in praying as in preaching; a man may preach faithfully many a yeere, and yet not convert a ſoule, and yet a man is not to give over waiting, but to obſerve after every Sermon what good is done, and whether God will give men repentance, as it is, 2. *Tim.* 2. 25. And if none bee converted, yet as *Eſay* 49. 4. *A mans reward is with the Lord: Every man ſhall receive his owne now, and according to his owne labour*: 1. *Cor.* 3. 8. *And not according to the ſucceſſe of his labour only*. So it is in praying, though thou miſſeſt

ſeſt againe and againe, and nothing ſucceeds thou prayeſt for, yet be not diſcouraged, for thy reward is with the Lord, which will come in one day. CHAP. X.

3 God doth it, not that he heares thee not, but to try thee, for a man to ſay as *David* ſayes. *Pſal.* 116.1.2. *God hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live*: that is nothing ſo much as to be able to ſay, well, I have prayed thus long, and for theſe many things, and never ſped, and *yet I will call upon him whilſt I live*, though I find no anſwere in this life, to find commings in, in a trade, and then to hold out trading ſtill, is not ſo much faithfulneſſe in a mans calling as when a man hath loſſes, and caſtings behind hand, and yet to follow it.

4 God uſually ſtayes ſo long that wee have done expecting, *Luk.* 18.8. *The Elect cry day and night*, but *God ſtayes ſo long, ver.* 7. that when hee comes *hee finds not faith*, they have done expecting, have forgot their prayers, and then *hee doth things, they looked not for.* Iſay 64.

Sect. 2.

A 2. cauſe, are ſinfull diſcouragements, which are 3,

Other diſcouragements there are wherein wee our ſelves are more faulty, and which are our ſins more then our temptations, which yet weaken, as expectation of hearing our prayers anſwered.

1 Slothfulneſſe in prayer.

Slothfulneſſe in prayer, when wee doe not put to all our might in praying, and then no wonder, wee doe not onely not obtaine, but that our owne harts miſgive us, that wee looke for little ſucceſſe and iſſue of ſuch prayers, *Qui frigidè rogat, docet negare*; hee that ſhewes himſelfe cold in a ſuite, teaches him he ſues to to denie him, if we ſee one ſeeking to us faintly, and ſlightly, wee are not then

CHAP. X. ſollicitous to denie him, but thinke hee will bee eaſily put off, and not thinke much; ſo accordingly when wee ſhall obſerve ſo much by ourſelves, and ſee our ſelves ſlothfull in praying, and praying *as if wee prayed not*, no wonder if by reaſon of that conſciouſneſſe, wee looke not after the ſucceſſe of ſuch prayers, which in the performance wee ſlighted, when wee prayed as if wee cared not whether wee were heard; when wee pray, as if wee were willing to be denyed, wee knowing that the Scripture ſayes, that *the fervent prayer* onely *prevailes*, that prayer which is ἐνεργουμένη, that ſets all the faculties on worke. *Iames* 5. 16. We cannot expect God ſhould graunt any good thing to us, which wee earneſtly doe not deſire, for though God ſells nothing to us for our prayers, but gives freely; yet hee would have his gifts accepted: now without large deſires, and longings they would not bee accepted: and what is fervent prayer, but the expreſſion of ſuch fervent deſires? *Iacob wreſtled* when hee obtained: *many ſeeke to enter*, ſayes *Chriſt*, *but you muſt ſtrive.* Now when wee know theſe things, and yet are ſlothfull, how can wee expect any anſwers at all? will not the conſciouſneſſe of it quell all our expectations? and hence it comes to paſſe that God proportioning his dealings with us to our prayers, becauſe we ſeeme to pray, and yet pray not to purpoſe, therefore God hee ſometimes ſeemes like one aſleepe, and then ſometimes to wake, and make faire offers to help, and yet ſeemes as it were to fall aſleep againe, becauſe wee were thus drowſy in our prayers; thoſe prayers that awaken God, muſt awaken us: Thoſe prayers

that

that ſtirre GOD, muſt firſt *ſtirre us to lay hold on* GOD as *Iſaiah* ſpeakes: as obedience ſtrengthens *faith* and aſſurance, ſo fervency in *prayer* begets confidence of being heard. In all other things ſlothfulneſſe doth diſcourage and weaken expectation, doth any man expect that riches ſhould come upom him when he doth his buſineſſe negligently? *for it is the diligent hand that maketh rich*: doth any man expect a crop and a harveſt, if hee takes not paines to plow, and ſowe, and threſh his Corne? no more if you doe not take paines with your hearts in Prayer, can you expect an anſwer or indeede will you. CHAP. X.

2 Cauſe: ſinfull diſcouragement herein is, looking at *prayer* onely as a duty to bee performed, and ſo performing it as a taske, and not ſo much out of deſires ſtirred up after the things to bee obtained, nor out of faith that wee ſhall obtaine them; as if a *Phyſitian* that hath a ſicke ſervant, hee preſcribing and commanding him to take ſome phyſicke to cure him, which his man takes indeed becauſe it is commanded and preſcribed by his Maſter as hee obeyes him in other buſineſſes, but not becauſe hee feeles the neede of *phyſicke*, neither as looking at it as a meanes, or as that which will have any worke upon him to cure him. Thus doe moſt in the world *pray* to *God*, take *prayer* as *a preſcription* onely, but not as a *meanes*, come to *God* dayly, but as to *a Maſter* onely in this performance, not as to *a Father*, and thus doing, no wonder if they looke for little effect of *prayers*: for our expectation never exceeds or reaches further then our end and intention,

2 Diſcouragement: looking at prayer as a duty rather then as a meanes to obtaine bleſſings

CHAP. X.

which wee had in any businesse, if I performe any Ordinance, but as a duty, then I rest there and expect no further: as if a man preacheth for *filthy lucre* onely, hee performes his duty, but lookes not after any other effect, of his Sermons after, so not will men doe after their *prayers*, when they performe them as duties onely. Now to helpe you in this, you are to looke to two things in *prayer*. First to a command from *God*. Secondly to the promise of *God*, and to consider it in a double relation, first as a duty in respect to the *Command*, secondly as a meanes to obtaine or procure blessings at *Gods* hand in relation to His *promise*: therefore in *prayer*, first an act of obedience, secondly an act of *faith* is to be exercised, *aske in faith nothing wavering, Iam.* 1. Now the most in the world performe it as an act of obedience onely, and so rest in the present performance and acceptation of it, but if a man *pray* in *faith*, he will *pray* with an eye to the promises, and looke on *prayer* as a meanes for time to come to obtaine such mercy at Gods hands, and if so, then hee is not satisfied till he hath an answer of his *prayers*, and till then will wait, as the *Church* sayes, *Shee would wait till He arise and pleade her cause.*

A direction. Two things to be lookt at in praying. A command. A promise.

3 Discouragment; falling into sinnes againe after praying.

A third sinfull discouragement is returning to his sinnes after *prayers*, when a man hath *prayed* for some mercy, and riseth full of much confidence that his *prayers* are heard, and so a while he walkes, yet falling into a sin that dasheth all his hopes, undoes his *prayers*, (as he thinks,) and calls them backe againe, meetes as it were with the answer, which is *Gods* messenger, and causeth it to returne to heaven

againe. How often when God hath granted a petition, and the decree is comming forth, and the grant is newly written, and the seale a setting to it, but an act of treason comming betweene, stops it in the seale, and deferres it, blots and blurreth all, both *prayer* and grant when newly written, and leaves a guilt in the minde, which quells our hopes of it, and then wee looke no more after our *prayers*; and this especially if when wee were a sinning, such a thought came in, (as often it doth to restraine us) are you not in dependance upon GOD for such a mercy, and have *Prayed* for it, and are faire for it, how then dare you doe this, and sinne against him? when in this case the heart goes on, this blots all the *prayer* newly made, and discourageth a man; for sayth the conscience, will God heare *sinners*, as they sayd? And thus farre it is true that *sinning* thus betweene *praying* and obtaining interrupts and hinders the obtaining our petitions; in that answerably as we doe thus dash and betray and undoe our *prayers*, so in a proportion, in the way to our obtayning the thing we *prayed* for, we find so many rubbes also and difficulties to arise; for as wee lay blockes in *Gods* way comming towards us to do us good, so he in ours: therefore often when a businesse goes prosperously on, and wee thinke wee shall carry it, comes some accident betweene the cup and the lippe, that casts all behinde hand againe, because answerably wee dealt with *God*, for when wee had *prayed*, and were encouraged and in good hopes, then by some *sinne* or other we spoyld all, and bereaved our selves of our expectation,

CHAP. X.

The answer to it.

CHAP. X.

tion, but yet this you are to consider, that as in the end *praying* useth to overcome *sinne* in *Gods* Children, so also *God* overcomes difficulties, and brings the matter to passe in the end; and know it is not *sinnes* past so much that hinder the *prayers* of *Gods* people, as the present unfitnesse and indisposition of their hearts for mercy.

TIDINGS

TIDINGS OF PEACE TO BE SPOKEN TO CONSCIENCES DISTRESSED.

THE maine thing intended to be insisted upon out of these words is dispatch, yet that I may not leave so faire and fruitfull a crop still standing upon the ground unreaped, I will goe on more briefely to have in the rest of that harvest the Text affords.

This *Psalme* as was said, was penned as a Prophecy of and *prayer* for the returne of *Gods* people out of the Captivity of *Babylon*, and the setling and establishment of that Church and state upon its former Basis, yet so as therein there is a further and more especiall aime had to the peace and glory to be

bee brought in by CHRIST, till when this Prophecy otherwise had but a poore and slender accomplishment, in regard of much outward glory or peace that that Church enjoyed.

So that the peace here spoken of, is to be extended larger then to outward prosperity, or an happy issue out of that calamity, even to speaking peace to drooping and weather-beaten consciences: and this kinde of peace was specially promised by the Prophet *Isaiah* to the people at their returne out of the Captivity, both in *Isaiah* 48. from 20. to the end, and *Isaiah* the 57. from the 14. to the end, there being many broken hearts that had wanted the light of *Gods* countenance long, having beene during the Captivity, banisht from the Ordinances of the Temple, and so they hung up their *harpes* mourning, and their *thoughts* were as if *God* had meant to *destroy them*, *Ier.* 29. 11. who afterwards were refreshed with inward *peace*, at the restauration of them, as well as with outward, as by those places doth appeare.

In these words you have a discovery of *Gods* proceedings in treating of peace or proclaiming war with his people and subjects.

Observ. 1. 1 You see *that sometimes God doth not speake peace to His owne Children.* This was their state for the present, when this *Psalme* was penned: *He will speake peace*, therefore at present Hee did not; yea, it may incline us to thinke that *God* at present spake the contrary, for the *Prophet* speakes this by *faith*, as contrary to sence, and present experience hee beleeves GOD intends to come againe to a treaty of peace, though now hee seemes to have

nothing

nothing but anger, and bloud, and war in His looks, and speeches and actions; and to threaten and proclaime warre and take up Armes; And thus *God* often deales with his owne Children, whether a people or a particular man: so with a nation, *Esa.*63. 10. *They rebelled, and He fought against them*: so with a particular man: *God* frowned upon and rated his Child *Ephraim, spake bitter things against Him*, (it is the phrase used, *Iere.* 31. 20.) though yet *Ephraim is my pleasant Child* sayes he: *David* had not a good word from him a long time; *Psal.*51.8. *Make mee to heare againe of joy and gladnesse*, and *Psal.* 50. 7. *Heare ôh my people, and I will speake*, but not against them they might hope, because Hee ownes them for His people, *heare ôh Israel, and I will testifie against thee:* and yet it followes, *I am the Lord thy God. Iob* sayes, he did not speake onely against him, but *wrote bitter things*, hee wrote as it were bookes against him, *Iob* 13.26. hee writing over in his Conscience *the sinnes of his youth* in letters of bloud, and wrath and terrors for them.

There must needs bee some great reason for this, *they being His people*, which is the second thing that is intimated, and may bee observed out of these words, namely, the reason, or mooving cause provoking God thus to interrupt the peace of His people: they had fallen into some grosse *folly* or other, some sinfull inordinate dispositions had been indulged unto, and nourished in them, which is usually, though not alwayes the cause of this his dealing: this is evident by this, that the conclusion of their peace, when it is made up againe hath this clause, as *Observ.* 2.

the

the onely article of reconciliation between them, that *they returne no more to their folly*, implying they had formerly runne out into some inordinacy, which to reduce them from, GOD had tooke up armes against them, and thereby taught them wisedome to take heed of loosing, and then buying peace at so deare a rate againe. And indeed all the quarrells, that GOD hath against a Nation, a particular place, or person, that belongs to him, doe begin there; *They rebelled*, and He *fought against them*, *Esa.* 63. 8. For the iniquity of his covetousnesse I was wrath, *Isa.* 57.

Reason. The reason is, for anger is out of love as well as hatred, which therefore he expresseth though with griefe, he should bee put to quarrell with those, hee hath set himselfe to love; And as wicked men, whom hee alwayes hates, may out of his patience have a truce; so on the contrary, with his owne, GOD may take up a quarrell, yet Hee loves them, and remembers them with everlasting kindnesse.

The *Vses* of both are these.

Vse 1. 1 As peace with *God* is deare to you, so to take heed of turning unto folly: Onely take this advertisement, that they are not meere follyes or ignorances that do interrupt or breake the peace; As it is not simply the outrage of some Pirats that will cause two States at peace to enter into a war, unles that State consent to their act, and maintaine them in their rapine: So it is not simply the rising of lusts that *warre in our members against the Law of the minde*, that breake the peace betweene God and us, unlesse they be approoved of, and consented unto,

nourished,

nouriſhed, and maintained with ſome preſumption; whilſt wee maintaine, and take up a conſtant fight againſt GODS enemies in us, and diſavow the outragious riſings of our luſts, the peace may hold and often doth; for whilſt we are not at peace with ſin, *God* may be at peace with us, and our Spirits; but ſo much peace as we give them, ſo much warre *God* takes up.

The ſecond *Vſe* is: Doth *God* take up quarrells againſt His owne? then upon any breach made, goe forth to meete Him: It is *Saint Pauls* exhortation, not *to let the Sunne goe downe upon thy wrath*, but to reconcile thy ſelfe ere night, with thy offended brother; but I turne the exhortation. *Let not the Sunne goe downe upon Gods wrath* towards thee; but every day make and renew thy peace with *God*, ere thou ſleepeſt, that as *David* ſayes, *thou mayeſt lye downe and ſleepe in peace*, *Pſalm.* 4. 8. *Vſe* 2.

The third *Vſe*: If the peace of *Gods* own people bee thus oftentimes interrupted, who yet are *the Sonnes of peace*: *Luk.* 10. what wrath is reſerved for the *children of diſobedience*, and open Rebells, that are *children of wrath*? becauſe *of diſobedience, there is no peace to the wicked, ſayes my God*, *Eſa.* 57. God is *a preparing againſt thee*, who ever thou art, that goeſt on, in *ſinne*: *if thou turne not*, *Pſal.* 7. 13. thou art preſt for hell, and art thither bound, to encounter with the wrath of the great *God*, and there where no truce is to bee had, there is *no diſcharge in that warre*, as *Salomon* ſayes, *Eccleſ.* 8. 8. Think of this, you that *ſinne*, and will *ſinne*; whoſe peace is not ſtrucke up betweene *God* and you, who never yet ſo much as entred with *God* into any treaty of peace, *Vſe* 3. Ephes. 2. 2.

peace, who never apprehended *God* and your selves at oddes.

Observ. 3. The third thing to bee observed out of the Text is this; *That when the Child of God wants peace, hee can have no peace till God speake it*; God must speake peace, if ever his people have it: therefore sayes he heere, *I will heare what God will speake*; hee speakes in opposition to the voyce of man, and the helpe of second causes, and of all meanes whatever, in time of distresse, which of themselves can doe no good.

Reason 1 Reason first: Because *God* is the *King of all* the world, the Soveraigne Lord of all. Now treatyes of warre and peace are the sole prerogative of Kings, and of them alone: they may consult with their subjects about establishing good Lawes, as they use to doe, *&c.* but the proclaiming Warre and peace with forreigne States, they have ever held in their owne hands; and so doth GOD who is the King of Kings.

Reason 2 Secondly, because God is the Iudge of all the World and the party offended, at whose suite all arrests and controversies doe come; now let a condemned man stand at the barre, and let all the standers by say what they will, bid him bee of good comfort, tell him that his cause will doe well, yet till he heare the Iudge himselfe speake, he cannot be at rest in his mind, the Iudge onely can acquit him and absolve him. The King alone speakes pardons; and so doth *God* peace; all afflictions are his arrests, thou must make thy peace with him, if thou wilt be at peace.

Reason 3 Thirdly, peace especially of conscience, is a thing

thing must bee *created*, for our hearts themselves are full of nothing but turmoile, as the *raging sea*, which *cannot rest*; *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, Isaiah* 57.19. men may speake it, but I must create it; A word of power such, as went forth, when light was created, must goe forth from God, or else there is no peace; for otherwise our hearts are as the sea; that rests not.

Fourthly, the wounds of conscience which are in Gods people, are of that nature, that nothing but God alone can cure them; for, the chiefe thing that wounds them, is the losse of Gods favour, not simply his wrath: for it is the glory of God, not selfe-love onely that makes them seeke him; therefore nothing gives peace, but the restoring of his favour, and the light of his countenance; the same dart that wounded, must heale againe; *Isay* 57. *I smote him, and I will heale him:* And as one that is sicke with love, when love is the disease, no physicke, no perswasion of friends can cure it, nothing but onely the love of the party-beloved; so when a soule is wounded for the losse of Gods love, one word from him, one good looke, one promise from him, that wee are his, will quiet the heart, more then all things in the world, and can onely give peace. Like to a poore child, that cryes for its mother; let who will dandle it, and play with it, and use it never so kindly, yet it will not be stilled, till the mother comes; so it is with a poore soule that cryes after God day and night. *Reason 4.*

1. *Vse.* In case thou art in distresse, especially of spirit, and want of peace of Conscience, waite upon God, in the use of meanes for peace; friends *Vse 1.*

may come to thee, and say: Why shouldest thou bee troubled? thou hast no such cause to bee cast downe; but all these are *miserable comforters*, (as *Iob* said) unlesse GOD speake peace; *David* heard by the Prophet *Nathan* that his sinne was pardoned, but yet his soule was not at quiet, till GOD would second it immediately by his Spirit; therefore sayes hee, when *Nathan*, had beene with him, *Psal.* 51.8. Make me to heare of joy and gladnesse. Art thou baited with hellish blasphemyes cast into thy soule? God must speake peace, and rebuke Satan for thee, and take him off thee; all thy friends, all the men in the world cannot doe it; they can onely say, as the Archangell said: *The Lord rebuke thee*; and hee can as easily doe it, as hee did rebuke *Laban*, and forbad him speaking roughly to *Iacob*; the same charge hee can give in an instant to Satan: therefore waite upon GOD, and looke up to him.

Vse 2. 2. Consider this against the time you come to dye; all your desire is to dye in peace, and, *Oh let thy servant depart in peace!* is the speech and desire of all; But who is it, that must speake peace to you then? God onely. At death you will send for a good Minister, or a good friend, to give you some comfort, (as you call it) but, if GOD will not speake it, how can they? if you could call all the Angels out of Heaven, and all the Saints both in earth, and Heaven; and so could have all that whole Colledge of Physitians about you, and they should desire to comfort you; yet if GOD will not speake it, who is able to doe it? *Iob* 34.29. *If hee hides his face, who can behold him?* None can shew his face

as the opposition shewes; false daubers may come to you, and say, *Peace, peace,* as they in the Prophet sayd; but listen what God will speake, hee onely must, and can doe it; and be sure you make sure of him before you come to dye: would any wise Prince deferre the treaty of peace with his enemy, till hee come into the field, and when the battell is begun? how foolish then are those, who neglect seeking after God, till the assault of death comes, and the *King of feares* with all his terrours, hath encompassed them round?

4. *Observation* is, that let Gods people bee in never so great distresse, yet *it is an easie thing for God to give peace* to them; marke the expression used here, It is but *speaking peace*; that is, it is as easie for him, to give peace, as it is for you to speake a word, it is no more to him: Then, our comfort is, that as hee onely must doe it; so hee easily can doe it, even with a word. *Observ.* 4.

Reason 1. Because his speaking is *creating*: if hee speaks, hee makes things to bee, even with a word; as at first, hee did but say, *Let there bee light, and there was light*; so still, if hee but say, *Let there bee peace*, there *is Peace*: hee made all, and upholds all by the word of his power. As therefore when the storme was at its height, and the waves most raging, yet at one word of Christs, they were all still; *The sea and the winds obey him*; so, when tentations are most fierce, and the doubts of thine owne heart most tumultuous, and raging; a word from him, can still them. *Reason* 1

Secondly, because the sight, which GOD gives to a mans spirit, when hee speaks peace, is a *Reason* 2

sure and infallible light, and therefore a satisfying light; so as when it comes, it must needs give peace; and no objection, no tentation can darken or obscure it, when it shines: *If hee give quietnesse, who can trouble?* sayes hee in *Iob* 34. 29. No creature is able to separate from his love, or the assurance of it.

1. It is a certaine and infallible light, which God gives, when hee speakes peace; The *anoynting from above*, which enlighteneth a mans eyes, *is truth, and is no lye*, 1 *Iohn* 2.27. that is, in *teaching a man* (of which hee there speakes it, for hee speakes not onely what hee is in himselfe, but what hee is in teaching us) hee doth it so, as a man is not deluded by it, and therefore it is added, *None else need teach* that man; for did not the spirit, (when hee did speake peace) speake so, as that, that man, to whom it is spoken, did not infallibly apprehend it, hee should speake in vaine; for so the Apostle reasons in case of *unknowne tongues*, that if a *trumpet* give *an uncertaine sound*; or a man speakes so, as it shall not bee knowne what hee speakes, *hee beates the aire*: 1 *Cor.* 14.9. Now therefore surely God, when hee speakes peace, speakes it so infallibly, and distinctly, that the soule knowes the meaning of it; It is not a voyce else; for, sayes the Apostle there, *v.* 10. The *end of all voyces is to signifie*, and therefore if I *know not the meaning of the voyce, hee shall bee as a Barbarian, that speakes to mee*: *v.* 11. especially, if the speaker undertakes to bee a *witnesse*, as the Holy Ghost in speaking peace is, 1 *Iohn* 5.6. Now to *witnesse*, is such a testimony, as is taken for infallible for the end of it,

is

is to put an *end to the controversie*, and it ends the strife betweene man and man; now the Holy Ghost when hee speakes, speakes as a *witnesse*, and therefore puts an end to a mans doubts: hee speaks infallibly.

And therefore in the second place, it is a satisfying light also; it is such a light, as dispells darkenes, as answers all objections; and so speakes peace home: as in a Question, and Controversie in Divinitie, or Logicke, when some one bottom truth is understood, a man hath a light, which goes through all the Objections, and answers them all; now such a light doth the spirit give to a poore distressed soule, about the great controversie of his owne salvation, and when hee doth speake peace, hee gives such a light, as satisfyes the mind; lets him see that in Gods free grace, and in CHRIST, which doth answer to all, hee, or all the divels can say against what wants, or objections are in himselfe. *Hee openeth*, and no man, nor devill is able to *shut*: And therefore when hee doth speake peace, his testimonie is taken and beleeved: If wee *receive the witnesse of men*, and rest in it: 1 *Iohn* 5. 9. *The witnesse of God is greater*, that is, of more power, and efficacie to perswade, and satisfie the soule.

1. *Vse*, is an Vse of comfort to poore soules, that are in distresse, and in such distresse sometimes, as they thinke, and say their case is desperate, and past recovery: so farre are their soules sometimes shot into despaire. Consider, how easie it is for you to have your condition altered, and changed, even in a moment; I tell thee, though (it may be) thou hast beene cast downe this twenty yeeres *Vse* 1.

and thy soule is battered, broken, hardened, setled, fixed in serious thoughts of thy ruine, and reprobation; yet one good looke, one good word from God, shall in an instant dispell all, alter thy conceit and apprehension cleane; God can and doth often more with one word, in one moment, then Sathan could doe in many yeeres, with all the objections hee could muster up. The truth of this, in experience wee often find, and observe in our selves and others; yea, and sometimes when hee doth speake peace, hee gives such satisfaction to a mans soule in that particular, that hee would be content to be as many yeeres more, in his spirituall conflicts to enjoy but the like light, one halfe houre; so easy is it, for God to speake peace. Though thou thinkest thy selfe never so *farre off from peace*, yet hee can speake peace to them, that *are affarre off, as well as those who are neere*: as himselfe sayes, *Isay* 57.19. for, sayes hee, It is *I* that speake it: When he doth it, then all thy doubts, and distresses, will be forgotten, as the paines of a woman in travaile are when a man child is borne.

2. *Vse.* Secondly, is the Church in any distresse? (as the Church here at this time was;) hee can redeeme it out of all with a word; A word spoken to *Cyrus* his heart, did set them in their owne land againe; so you have it expressed, *Esa.* 44. 26, 27, 28. *The God that saith to Ierusalem, thou shalt be inhabited, and to the Cities of Iudah, ye shall be built*; you see his manner of doing it, it is but with a word speaking; *hee sayes to Ierusalem, be built*; and though there bee never so great impediments in the way, he will *say to the deepe, be dry*, that his people may passe over; hee

hee dried up a whole nation, a sea of people; namely the *Babylonians*, to make way for this deliverance: and when they are conquered, and *Cyrus*, a new King comes to have the sway of things, GOD speakes to his heart also; *That saith of Cyrus, hee is my shepheard*, and causeth him to say to Ierusalem, be thou built; Therefore goe to him, and trust in him in all the distresses of the Church, as the Church also did; *Psal.* 44. 4. *Thou art my King, command deliverances*; A *mandamus* from GOD doth it, and will doe it at any time.

LET GOD bee never so angry, and his peoples distresse never so great, *yet hee will speake peace in the end* to his people: you heard before, that if wee have peace, HEE onely must give it, and then, that hee could, and was able with ease to doe it: and now you shall heare, that hee will certainly doe it in the end. *Observ.* 5.

The *Reasons* the text suggests are these:

1. If wee consider but, who this *God* is, that is to speake peace, *I will heare what* GOD *the* LORD *will speake*; hee is *the Lord*, and therefore able to speake what pleaseth him; hee is peculiarly *the God of peace*, and therefore willing to speake peace; now, 1. when it is said, he is the *God of peace, and the God of comfort*; the meaning is, hee is full of 1 *Reason.*

it, infinitely full of it, and out *of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeakes*; thoughts of peace, and love to his, doe boile within him, as hatred, or malice doth in a malicious man to his enemy; ſo as hee cannot containe and forbeare expreſſing it towards them; that as *David* ſayes, his *thoughts did burne within him*, and at laſt, *brake forth*; ſo in God: *I know the thoughts, I thinke towards you* (ſayes he to them of the captivitie) *Ier.* 29. 11. *They are thoughts of peace, and not of evill.* And 2. beſides that theſe his thoughts of peace are taken up of himſelfe; his ſon alſo hath beſpoken peace for us; and therefore God will ſpeake it: Even as *Ioſeph*, though hee ſpake roughly awhile to his brethren; yet could not in the end containe, *Gen.* 45. 1. ſo nor God.

Reaſon 2. Secondly, Let us conſider, who they are to whom hee is to ſpeake it, they *are his people*, as the text hath it; and to them there is no queſtion, but hee will ſpeake peace; though hee ſeemes angry for a while: They are his people, that is the reaſon given, 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *Hee will not caſt off his people*; as alſo *Eſa.* 63. 8, 9. *When they rebelled, hee was wrath, yet hee ſaid; ſurely, they are my people, ſo I was their Saviour; They?* why they are the *ſons of peace*: 10. *Luke* 6. ordained for peace, and therefore ſhall bee ſure to have it; and although ſome differences may ariſe betwixt God and them, yet there is a naturall συμπάθεια in the Lord, that mooves him to ſpeake peace in the end to them; as the dumbe ſon of *Craeſus*, when he ſaw his father like to bee kild, though hee had never ſpake before, yet then out of an *impetus* of ſpirit, the ſtrings of his tongue were unlooſed,

unlooſed, and hee cryed out to the murtherer, *Kill not King Cræſus*; ſo, when the enemies of his Church are ready to devoure his people, *Sathan* is ready to ſwallow his child up in deſpaire, then Gods bowels worke within him, and hee can hold no longer, but cryes, *ſave my child, ſave my Church; Is Ephraim my pleaſant child*, (ſayes God) *Ier.* 31. 20. Well ſayes *God, though I ſpake againſt him*, and tooke him up, and chid him ſoundly, *yet I cannot forget* my child, ſayes hee, nor my fatherly affection to him, *but my bowels are ſtirred, and I will ſurely have mercy on him.*

Thirdly, otherwiſe if God not in the end ſpeake peace, they would indeed *returne to follie*, which is the third thing in the text; for his end of ſpeaking peace, is that they might not returne to follie, *Pſal.* 125. 3. *The rod of the wicked ſhall not alwayes lye upon the righteous, leaſt they put forth their hand to iniquitie:* Therefore at the laſt verſe, *Peace ſhall be upon Iſrael:* as for this cauſe, hee ſpeakes outward peace, ſo alſo inward, and ſuffers not the rod of Sathan, and of his heavy diſpleaſure to lye upon their hearts; for elſe they would returne to the pleaſures of ſinne; for every creature muſt have ſome delight: their ſpirits would faile, and be tired out elſe, and wearied in good duties, if GOD ſhould not in the end ſpeake peace, *Iſay* 5. 7. *The ſpirit would faile before me*: when the child ſwounds in the whipping, GOD lets fall the rod, and fals a kiſſing it, to fetch life into it againe; as tis a rule in Phyſicke, ſtill to maintaine nature: and therefore when that ſhall be in hazzard to be deſtroyed, they leave giving purging phyſicke, and give cordials; *Reaſon* 3

dials; so doth God with his people, though with purging physicke, hee often brings their spirits very weake, and low, yet hee will uphold and maintaine their spirits, so as they shall not faile, and be extinguisht, but then hee will give cordials to raise them up againe.

The

THE FOLLIE OF RELAPSING AFTER Peace ſpoken.

Pſalme 85. verſe 8.

——*But let them turne no more to folly.*

Obſerv. 6.

THe ſixth Obſervation is, That *Peace being ſpoken to* their hearts by *God, they ſhould returne no more to folly*: ſee this *Ezra 9.13,14. thou having puniſht us leſſe then we deſerve, & given us ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould wee againe breake thy Commandements, wouldeſt thou not be angry with us till thou hadſt conſumed us?*

Reaſon 1.

1 Reaſon: Becauſe it will be a greater aggravation in *ſinning*; It is made the aggravation of *Salomons ſinne, 1 King. 11. 9. That God had appeared to him twice*; they were eſpeciall appearances and manifeſtations of mercy; and though ſuch doe now ceaſe, yet wee reade of ſuch as are analogicall to them; *Iohn* 14.21. CHRIST promiſing to *manifeſt Himſelfe*; which is by ſhedding abroad His love, and His Fathers love into the heart, which is evident by the former words, *he ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him*, and after he ſaith, *we will come to him, and make our abode with him, verſe* 23.

and

and 27. *My peace I will give unto you.* Now such appearances will bee set upon the score of every *sin*, many yeares after, as they were upon *Salomons*; And the reason is, because nothing wounds an ingenious loving Nature more, then matter of unkindnesse: *if it had beene my enemy* sayes *David*, *I could have borne it*, *Psal.* 55. 12, 14. *but it was thou ôh man, mine acquaintance: we tooke sweete counsell together*, a bosome friend to whom I had committed my secrets, opened my heart; so when *God* hath unbosomed himselfe as it were to a man, and told him what was in his heart towards him: this goes nigh him, if he lifts up the heel against him. And the reason of that further also is, [1] because of all things else, a man cannot endure to have his love abused, you come nigh him when you doe so; for his love is himselfe, and commands all in him; so that abuse his love, and you strike at his heart, it is lesse to abuse any excellency in a man, to reproach and extenuate his parts, learning, *&c.* though these are deare to him, but his love is his bowels; And therfore, when *God* hath opened his heart to a man, and set his love upon him, and revealed it to him, and he carryes himselfe unworthily, *it paines him at the heart.* Besides, [2] it is against the law of Nature and of Nations, to seeke out for a peace, and get it concluded, and then secretly to prepare for, and enter into a warre; nothing more hatefull, or can exasperate two Nations one against another more, then this; It was the aggravation of *Absaloms sins*, that being newly reconciled with his father, and taken into favour againe, after two yeares discountenance, he then began to rebell more closely.

2 *Reason*

2 Reason is intimated in the word *folly*; as if the Lord should have sayd; set aside the unkindnesse and wrong you doe me, yet therein you befoole your selves; you will have the worst of it. And indeed, when God doth afterwards draw nigh to a man againe upon that his recovery, then it appeares to be folly, even in that mans owne apprehension: when hee hath tasted how sweete God is, then come and aske him, what, will ye returne to sin againe? he will then say, aske mee if I will wound or cut my flesh: It is impossible, thinkes he, I should any more be so besotted, if there were no other motives; he thinkes it the greatest folly in the world: and therfore God chuseth out that expression, and placeth it here in this case, because it is indeed the greatest folly in Gods sight: and is so apprehended by our selves, when wee looke upon *sinne* after peace is spoken to us; it is folly to *sinne* against God at any time, but especially then, and that will appeare by these particulars.

1 Because, before he had that peace, he felt the bitternesse of *sinne*; for *God* never speakes peace, till that bee felt; now that is an argument even to sense, never to returne to it againe; which a foole will be warned by; *A burnt Child dreads the fire*; even a Child will take heed being taught by sense; when a man shall be in great distresse, and his Conscience shall suggest to him, as *Ier.* 4. 18. *Thy wayes and thy doings have procured these things to thee, this is thy wickednesse*, a speech like that when you say to your Children, when they have gotten any harme, or cold, or sickenesse; this is *your playing* and gadding and going in the Snow, and your eating of fruit,

fruit, &c. so doth *God* speake there, to them when they were in distresse, this *is your wickednesse, for it is bitter, it reacheth to the heart*; it woundeth the Conscience, the wounding of which, of all else is the greatest misery; when once a man after this hath peace restored to him, and hee comes newly out of such a distresse, aske him then how hee likes turning to such a *sinne* againe, and he will tell you it is the greatest folly in the world: aske *David* if he will murther any more after his bones have beene broken, and set againe.

2 Thou wilt easily acknowledge, it is folly to returne to *sinne* againe, if thou considerest the terms, upon which thou didst obtaine thy peace; Reckon what paines it cost thee, to wash out the guilt and stayne, which *sinne* had made, what vowes and resolutions thou madest, what bonds thou didst seale unto, what promises never to returne, what *prayers* and teares, what rappes and knockes at Heaven Gates, ere thou couldest get an answer, or *God* to speake one word, he making as if he had not beene within; why is it not folly now to loose that in an instant, thou hast beene a getting so long, haply many yeares, and with so much paines and cost? you use it as an excuse to prodigalls to say, things lightly come by, are lightly gone; and yet you count them, and call them fooles for it; as not knowing, what it is to earne a penny; how much more folly is it, when a man having afore morgaged his peace, and *God* restored it againe after much suite, and waiting many a terme, and then to come home, and venture to cast all away at one throw at dice? such a foole art thou, when thou returnest to sinne; to

drinke

drinke that at one draught, which thou haſt been getting many a yeare; what madneſſe is it, when thou haſt taken much paines, to waſh thy ſelfe, then to wallow in the mire againe, and make thy ſelfe new worke, what folly is it? who but Children and fooles will doe thus? That which the Church ſaid in another caſe, may well bee alluded to in this, 5 *Cant.* 31. *I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

3 Conſider, what it is thou doſt hazard to looſe by returning to folly, *thy peace*: *David* loſt it, as appeares, *Pſal.* 51. 12. therefore ſayes he, *reſtore to me the joy of thy ſalvation*; In looſing of which, thou looſeſt more then if the *ſinne* thou chooſeſt, were able to give thee all the world; it could not recompence thee, no not the loſſe of one houres communion with God, which in a moment will bring thee in more ſweetneſſe, than all thy ſins can doe to eternity: if all the pleaſures of ſin were contracted and the quinteſſence of them ſtrained into one cup, they would not afford ſo much, as one drop of true peace with *God*, let fall into the heart; *It is peace which paſſeth underſtanding*: few pleaſures here doe exceed the ſenſes, nay, the ſenſes are capable of more than the things can give; but this paſſeth underſtanding, *Gods loving kindneſſe is better than life.* If it were propounded to thee, thou muſt loſe thy life next moment, thou haſt committed ſuch a ſinne, wouldeſt thou venture, if thou didſt beleeve it? Now *The loving kindneſſe of God* is *better than life*, and wilt thou loſe it, though but for a moment?

4 It is folly to returne againe, becauſe the pleaſures

sures of sinne will be much lesse to thee after thou hast had peace spoken; take them at the best, when they are freshest, and when thy palate was most in relish, and tast with them, when thou wert carnall, and ere thou knewest what sweetnesse was in *God*, and they then were but poore sorry pleasures: but now to thee, they will prove far more empty than ever before; they are empty vaine pleasures even to him that hath them in their flower, and in his season of sinning; and therefore all wicked men are weary, and doe inwardly complaine of their condition, onely they cannot finde sweetnesse in *God*, and so are faine to keepe themselves to their husks: but alas, to thee they are farre lesse worth than to another man that is a sinner, who knowes not *God*, and therefore thou art like to have a worse bargaine of it; another man can make more money of a sin than thou, and get more pleasure out of it, than thou art able to doe.

For first, thy conscience having bin scorched wth sin, as scalt flesh deares more and is more sensible in comming to the fire, than other parts of the body; so thy conscience is of a quicker sense, whereas theirs is seared; and so they commit all *uncleanesse with greedinesse*; but thine is tender and galled in the act, and so allayes the pleasures of thy sinne, and mingleth the more bitternesse with it.

2 Besides this galling of conscience, which is common to thee with many an unregenerate man, thou hast a principle of grace, an inner man, which is dead to such pleasures, that tasts them not, that is like *Barzillai*, who through age 2 *Sam.* 19.35. could not tast either what he eate or dranke; as

young

young men doe; no more can that *New man* in thee, and therefore it can be but halfe as pleasant to thee as to another man. If one side of a man be taken all with a numbe palsey, what pleasure is it to that man, to exercise his limbes in the actions of life? He is but a halfe man, and lives but halfe a life; so it is with thee: when thou hast grace in thy heart, then but halfe thy heart can take pleasure in sinning, that new man the other halfe, reluctates griefes for it, hates what thou doest; and all this must needs strike off much of the pleasure.

But 3. If we adde to this, that this new man in him having once tasted what sweetnesse is in God, and *How good the Lord is*; then like a man that hath eaten sweet-meats, other things are out of taste with him: so it is here; and therefore it is folly to returne. *No man* (sayes Christ *Luke* 5. *ult.*) *having drank old wine desireth new, for he saith the old is better*; a man used to high fare cannot agree so well with thinne diet; so the soule having beene used to tast great pleasures in *God*, the impression and remembrance of them leaves his soule lesse-satisfied than another mans; a stomack that hath beene enlarged to full diet, lookes for it, and riseth more hungry from a slender meale; now communion with *God* inlarges the faculties, and widens them, and makes them more capable of greater joyes, than other men have; and therefore the creature is lesse able to fill them; still he remembers, with much griefe, whilest he is eating his husks, what fare he had in his fathers house: and oh, *Then it was better with me, than now.* Call me not *Naomi*, but call me *Marah*, as she said, *For I went out full*

and am come home empty; so doth he say, when he comes from the act of sinning: he went with his heart full of peace, and meeting with a bargaine of sinning, thought to eke out his joy, and make it fuller, but he comes home empty.

Vse 1. 1 Vse, is to those who have had peace spoken to them, let them at such times feare themselves and *God* most; for then comes in this, as you see here, as the most seasonable admonition that can be given, to returne no more to folly. 1. Feare God then most: for of all times else, then sins provoke him most; to come and cal him *Father*, and *the guide of your youth*, and yet to fall to sin, this is *to doe as evill as you can*, you cannot doe worse, *Ier.* 3.4,5. So *Ezra* 9. *After such an escaping should we againe breake thy Commandements, wouldest thou not be angry till thou hadst consumed us?* In times of affliction it is the property of a good childe to love God most; in times of speaking peace, to *feare God* most and his *goodnesse*; and to feare to offend him for his goodnesse sake. Did I onely say, that God is provoked most then, if you returne to folly? Nay, I adde further, he is grieved, which is more than to be provoked, and therefore you shall marke that expression and admonition not to grieve, God then comes in, when the *Spirit hath sealed us up to the day of redemption*, *Eph.* 4.30. Then by sinning we are said more properly to grieve him, then before, when he hath so far ingaged himselfe to love a man, and expressed himselfe to him, and set his seale upon him for his. God is angry with wicked mens sins, but he is grieved for yours. To grieve him is more than to anger him. Meere anger is an affection

affection can eaſe it ſelfe by revenge, and by comming even againe with the party, and when we can or intend to doe ſo, our mindes are not ſo much aggrieved, but pleaſe themſelves rather to thinke of the revenge which we meane to execute: ſo when wicked men ſin whom God meanes to meet with, he is ſaid to be angry rather than grieved; & ſayes, *I will eaſe my ſelfe of mine adverſaries, Iſay* 1.24. and avenge my ſelfe of my enemies. But here, as when a mans wife that lyes in his boſome, his child ſhall wrong him; ſo it is when one ſins, whom God hath ſet himſelfe to love, and done much for, and made knowne his everlaſting kindneſſe unto, and ſealed to the day of redemption: this goes to his heart, grieves him rather than angers him. Thoſe are the trueſt and deepeſt griefes. What ſhould he doe with you in this caſe? if afflict you, and by that meanes goe about to turne you from your iniquity; therein hee ſhall but afflict himſelfe as it were; for *Though they rebelled, yet when they were afflicted he was afflicted, Eſay* 63.9,10. As when a Father that is a Magiſtrate, or as one that maintaines a Student in a Colledge, if hee puniſheth a childe or pupill in his purſe, he puniſheth himſelfe, ſo muſt God afflict himſelfe to afflict you; put not the Lord into theſe ſtraits if you have any love in you. And 2. as thou art therefore to feare God moſt then, ſo thy ſelfe moſt, and to be more watchfull over thy owne heart; thou art then apt to returne to folly, if thou takeſt not heed; as when a man hath beene very hot, or ſwet much, he is apt to take the greateſt cold. *Hezekiah*, after *God* ſealed peace to him and anſwered his prayers, and renewed

Vse 4. *Vse* 4. The doctrine of assurance (if not abused) and of GODS speaking peace to men, is no dangerous doctrine to make men secure and presumptuous in sinning; when peace is preached in any mans heart, this use naturally flowes from that Doctrine, *returne no more to folly*. The very scope of the whole Epistle of Saint *Iohn* is to helpe all beleevers to assurance, as appeares by the 1 *Ioh.* 1, 4, 5. and the 5. Chap. 13. *These things I write you, that yee might have communion with* GOD, *and that your joy might be full*. But this will open a way to all licentiousnesse; No sayes Saint *Iohn*, Chap. 2. 1. *These things I write unto you that yee sinne not*, nothing guards the heart more against tentations, then the peace of GOD: it is said to *guard* the heart, *Philip.* 4. 2. yea and if you doe sin, assurance of GODS love is the speediest way to recover you. *If any one doth sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, &c. *and he that hath this hope in him*, that is, to live with CHRIST, and *knowes what manner of love the Father beares us, purifies himselfe as he is pure*, 1 *Ioh.* 3. 1, 2, 3. If there were no more but selfe-love in a man, it were then no wonder if he doth abuse it. For selfe-love where the love of *God* is wanting, is unthankefull, and ungratefull, willing to take all the love and kindnesse which is afforded, and abuse it, and worke upon it for its owne advantage, and it is true also that because we have too much of this principle unmortified in us, therfore *God* trusteth so few with much assurance, but where true love to *God* is seated, and much of it implanted, there the love of *God* and

and the peace of *God* doth as kindly and naturally enkindle and enflame and ſet it aworke, even as arguments ſutable to ſelfe-love doe worke upon and ſtirre that principle, and all within in us. For grace is more for *God* then for our ſelves, it being the image of *Gods* holineſſe, whoſe holineſſe conſiſts in this, to aime at himſelfe in all: and therefore when *Gods* free grace towards a man is revealed, it raiſeth him up to higher ſtraines of love to *God*, and hatred of *ſin*. And therefore it is obſervable *Pſal.* 51. 12. that *David* when he *prayes for the reſtoring of the joy of his ſalvation*, hee *prayes* not ſimply for it, or alone, but withall *prayes* for a *free ſpirit, eſtabliſh me with thy free ſpirit*: that is a ſpirit of ingenuity, which is kindly, ſweetly and freely wrought upon: therefore when wee have a free ſpirit wrought in us, then that free love that is in *God* to us will worke moſt kindly upon it, and conſtraines us to *love him that loved us firſt*. *The love of* CHRIST *conſtraines us*: 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. *Becauſe we thus judge, that if* CHRIST *died for all, then they which live ſhould not live unto themſelves, but unto Him that died for them*: *Saint Paul* gives the reaſon, why this love of CHRIST did thus conſtraine him, becauſe he *did thus judge*, that is, this conſideration of CHRISTS love; hee having a principle of love in his heart to CHRIST, he found this a powerfull prevailing reaſon to perſwade him to live to CHRIST, and ſo ſhall wee if wee thus judge, and it will have this naturall conſequence as naturally to follow upon it in our hearts, as any reaſon in any other

newed the lease of his life; his heart got cold, he did returne to folly, because then the heart is apt to grow lesse watchfull, and to thinke it selfe fortified enough against any tentation. As S. *Peter* having seene Christ transfigured in the Mount, grew confident in his owne strength; and know that the Devill watcheth such an opportunity most, for hee gets a great victory if he can foile thee then, after he hath beene foiled himselfe, and when thou art most triumphing over him, how many battels have beene lost through security of victory and recoyling of the enemy, and besides our corrupt nature so farre as unrenewed is apt to gather heart to it selfe, to slight sinne, as thinking its pardon easily gotten.

Therefore when thou art tempted, labour often to renew those thoughts which thou hadst of thy sinne at that time, when thou wert suing for peace before thy peace was gotten; when thou wouldest have given a world for *Gods* favour, and also what thoughts thou hadst of it, when *God* spake peace, how thou didst abhorre it, yea, thy selfe; and looke what sinne was most bitter to thee, and an enemy to thy peace; as if uncleanesse, Idlenesse, neglect of prayer, ill company, &c. preserve in thy heart those bitter apprehensions of it, and say of it, thou hast *beene a bloudy sin to me*; as *Moses* wife said of her husband: and though I have got peace and my life saved, yet it was a bloudy sin to Christ, his bloud was shed to purchase this my peace: and shall I returne to it?

And when tempted to it againe, have recourse to the kindnesse *God* shewed thee in pardoning, and say:

say, how shall I doe this, and sinne against *God*, say as he said, *Is this thy kindnesse to thy friend?* 2 *Sam.* 16. 16. and what, shall I now *Absalom* like, now I am new reconciled to my Father, fall a plotting treason againe? what shall I make more worke for *prayer*, more worke for *God*, breake my bones againe, and lye roaring againe? Think thus, I was burnt in the hand afore, I shall bee racked surely now, *sinne no more, least a worse thing befall thee.*

Vse 3. What good heart that beares a child-like affection to GOD, would offend such a *God*, that be thy distresses what they will be, will certainely speake peace: then doe not put him to it, spend not upon that precious stocke of his free grace and love. Tis true *He is married to thee*, and therfore *though thou hast gone a whoring after many lovers.* *Ier.* 3. 1, 2. and 4. Still he sayes, *Returne*, for *I am maried to thee:* as when Man and wife are fallen out they consider, wee must live together, and therefore they reconcile themselves againe and againe, so consider it must bee betweene *God* and thee, and make it a meanes and motive to recover thee as *Samuel* did: 1 *Sam.* 12. 22. *You have committed this great sinne, but* GOD *will not cast you off, you are His people.* Goe home to Him againe, He will speake peace. Thinke thus, the time will come wherein GOD will be friends againe with me, He and I cannot be strange long, though I would, Hee will not: *Esa.* 57 18, 19. though he went on stubbornly yet *God* healed him, and would not loose his child, therefore I will returne of my selfe. *Vse* 3.

Vse 4. *Vse* 4. The doctrine of assurance (if not abused) and of GOD'S speaking peace to men, is no dangerous doctrine to make men secure and presumptuous in sinning; when peace is preached in any mans heart, this use naturally flowes from that Doctrine, *returne no more to folly*. The very scope of the whole Epistle of Saint *Iohn* is to helpe all beleevers to assurance, as appeares by the 1 *Ioh.* 1, 4, 5. and the 5. Chap. 13. *These things I write you, that yee might have communion with* GOD, *and that your joy might be full.* But this will open a way to all licentiousnesse; No sayes Saint *Iohn*, Chap. 2. 1. *These things I write unto you that yee sinne not*, nothing guards the heart more against tentations, then the peace of GOD: it is said to *guard* the heart, *Philip.* 4. 2. yea and if you doe sin, assurance of GODS love is the speediest way to recover you. *If any one doth sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*, &c. *and he that hath this hope in him*, that is, to live with CHRIST, and *knowes what manner of love the Father beares us, purifies himselfe as he is pure*, 1 *Ioh.* 3. 1, 2, 3. If there were no more but selfe-love in a man, it were then no wonder if he doth abuse it. For selfe-love where the love of *God* is wanting, is unthankefull, and ungratefull, willing to take all the love and kindnesse which is afforded, and abuse it, and worke upon it for its owne advantage, and it is true also that because we have too much of this principle unmortified in us, therfore *God* trusteth so few with much assurance, but where true love to *God* is seated, and much of it implanted, there the love of *God* and

and the peace of *God* doth as kindly and naturally enkindle and enflame and set it aworke, even as arguments sutable to selfe-love doe worke upon and stirre that principle, and all within in us. For grace is more for *God* then for our selves, it being the image of *Gods* holinesse, whose holinesse consists in this, to aime at himselfe in all: and therefore when *Gods* free grace towards a man is revealed, it raiseth him up to higher straines of love to *God*, and hatred of *sin*. And therefore it is observable *Psal.* 51. 12. that *David* when he *prayes for the restoring of the joy of his salvation*, hee *prayes* not simply for it, or alone, but withall *prayes* for a *free spirit, establish me with thy free spirit*: that is a spirit of ingenuity, which is kindly, sweetly and freely wrought upon: therefore when wee have a free spirit wrought in us, then that free love that is in *God* to us will worke most kindly upon it, and constraines us to *love him that loved us first*. *The love of* CHRIST *constraines us*: 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. *Because we thus judge, that if* CHRIST *died for all, then they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them*: *Saint Paul* gives the reason, why this love of CHRIST did thus constraine him, because he *did thus judge*, that is, this consideration of CHRISTS love; hee having a principle of love in his heart to CHRIST, he found this a powerfull prevailing reason to perswade him to live to CHRIST, and so shall wee if wee thus judge, and it will have this naturall consequence as naturally to follow upon it in our hearts, as any reason in any other

kind hath, that is brought to enforce any other conclusion; he had a new judgement, and therby saw reason & strength and force in the argument, and therfore as the mind is constrained (as it were) to assent to a truth, prooved by force of reason that if you grant this, this or that will follow: so because we judge this reasonable by an argument drawne out of *loves topickes*, that if CHRIST died for all, who otherwise must themselves have dyed, that then they should live to him, and this constraines us. *Amor dei est extaticus, nec se sinit esse sui Iuris.*

The

THE CASE OF RELAPSING INTO THE SAME SINNE after Peace ſpoken, *reſolved:*

THis Text and admonition here gives a juſt occaſion to conſider a little of that ſo often queſtioned caſe of Conſcience concerning relapſes of GODS Children into the ſame *ſinnes* and folly againe, and whether after peace ſpoken GODS people may returne againe to folly. Some have held, that a man after a ſecond repentance could not fall into the ſame *ſinne* againe, or if he did, it excluded him from mercy for time to come. For the comfort of ſome poore ſoules whoſe caſe and tentation this may bee, I will ſpeake ſomewhat though ſparingly and with caution.

1 The Scripture no where excludeth thoſe from the ſtate of grace, or barres mercy from thoſe, that have relapſed into the ſame *ſinne*, eſpecially ſo long as in regard of the manner of their *ſinning* it be but folly, not wickednesſe or wilfull *ſinning*, that is, rather proceeding out of errour of underſtanding, and heat and impetuouſneſſe of fooliſh affections, then obſtinacy and malice

lice in the wil, and with *despite of the Spirit of grace*, *Heb.* 10. 27.

Yea: 2.] In Scripture wee meete with such passages and promises, as may undoubtedly uphold any soule, that hath so fallen after peace received, into the same *sinne*, and preserve him from apprehending himselfe excluded therefore from mercy and the state of grace, as *Hose.* 14. 4. *I will heale their backslidings, I will love them freely:* unlesse they had fallen after repenting and former healing, it could not have beene called backsliding: and yet this hee promises to heale, and withall shewes the ground that mooves him to it, his loving them freely: for if in any thing his free love is shewne to any of his children and drawne out, it is in healing againe such a backsliding soule after recovery and peace given. For the falling into the same *sinne* which hath beene repented of and healed, provokes GOD more then a thousand other acts of *sinnes* formerly committed though in the same kind, and therin also to shew his free love, that he can pardon even the abuse of love it selfe, he leaves some thus to *sinne* after his love shed abroad in their hearts. Some he shewes his free love unto, in keeping them from *sinning*; others in pardoning them, and giving them repentance; they are but severall wayes of drawing it forth, so that if in any thing, herein his free love is shewne: for if it were not free, it would never endure it selfe to be abused: and likewise the sure mercies of *David* are then shewen, when God *multiplies to pardon*, so *Isa.* 55. 3. having mentioned the promise of

the

the *sure mercies of David.* Hee promises to *multiply to pardon*, as it is in the Originall, *verse* 7. which are thus joyned, to shew the sureness of his Covenant, and because wee might happily multiply to *sinne*, at least it supposeth the possibility of it againe. God runs upon such a suppositition in that expression of his, to his owne people, *Iere.* 3. 1. 2. They *say if a man put away his wife, and shee becoms another mans, shall not the Land be greatly polluted? but thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet returne againe to me* saith the LORD. He speakes to her as to one, had beene his Wife, who though shee had not beene put away by him, but had put away her selfe, and run away, not once but often, and that with many lovers, and sometimes in the midst of her whoredomes, had come in and made challenge of his former love and pleaded his former mercy to her, and yet fallen backe againe *verse* 4. 5. (where he addes, *wilt thou not from this time cry, my Father, and thou art the guide of my youth*, that is, I know sayes God you will come now and cry as heretofore you have done, and say, ôh thou art my Father and my Husband, and confidently stil claime an interest in mee uponany former kindnesse, and *yet doe as evill as you can*; for you cannot do worse then thus to abuse my love) yet for all this at the 12. *verse*, *Returne thou backsliding Israel* saith the Lord, *for I am married to you*, *verse* 14. That which he doth thus to a nation, he may doe to a particular man who is his child.

Againe, 3. There are not altogether examples wanting for this.

1 We

1 We find *Sampson* a godly man (whom yet wee would scarce have thought such but that wee find his name in the list of those worthies *Heb.* 11) ensnared with a *Philistine* woman against the counsell of his parents: *Iudg.* 14. 3. who cleerely laid open his *sinne* to him, and hee was in the event reprooved for his folly, for his Wife deceived him, told his riddle to his enemies which he in the end perceived, and further to reproove him in the issue, shee was given away to another, *verse* 16, 17, 20. from all which passages of reproofe, an holy man that had his eyes in his head could not but see his errour, and yet againe a long while after this, (twenty yeares after, *Iudg.* 15. 20. (when certainely ere that he had repented of this his *sinne*, for which his parents before, and after God so clearely did rebuke him,) and yet after this he went to Gaza, *Iudg.* 16. *verse* 1. *and saw a harlot & went in to her*, and there scaped narrowly with his life at midnight, and *verse* 4. After that also it came to passe he fell in love with another, as bad as any of the former, *Dalilah*, who was his ruine; but his returning thus to folly cost him deare, for in the end hee was taken as a Captive to the *Philistims* his enemies, and that through her false-hood, deprived of his strength he had spent upon these women, had his eyes those betraying lights put out, that had ensnared him, and himselfe made a foole of, to make his enemies sport; So as no child of God can take any great encouragements thus to returne to folly for the future by his example, though comfort they may have therfrom

from in case they have returned for the time past.

2 Another example may be that of *Iehoſaphat* who committed a great *ſin* in joyning with *Ahab* that wicked King that *ſold himſelfe to worke wickednesse*, 2 *Chron.* 18. 1. 2 3. and he was foretold what would bee the ſucceſſe of that confederacy and journey by *Michaiah* before hee went with him to battell, and after in the battell it ſelfe, where hee hardly eſcaped with his life, and by an extraordinary providence at his *prayer* was delivered *verſ* 31. 32. and if that were not ſufficient, hee ſends a Prophet to him, *Chap.* 19. 2. who with open mouth reprooves him and diſcovers to him his *ſinne*, *ſhouldeſt thou helpe the ungodly & love them that hate the Lord, therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord*: which meſſage to ſo good a man doubtleſſe was not in vaine, but humbled him for that his *ſin*, and wrought repentance in him to avert that wrath, and yet after that great and miraculous deliverance of him and his people Chap. 20. we find him relapſing into the ſame *ſin*, *ver.* 35. and *after this did Iehoſaphat joyne himſelfe with Ahaziah King of Iſrael who did very wickedly, and hee joyned himſelfe with him to make ſhips to goe to Tarſhiſh*: which another Prophet in like manner reproveth, and likewiſe God himſelfe rebuked by the like ill ſucceſſe of that league to the former, *the ſhips were broken verſe* 37.

3 Saint *Peter* though a man who ſeemed by other of his carriages bold enough, was yet three ſeverall times ſurpriſed with baſe feare, once when he

he tempted CHRIST, not to hazard himselfe at *Ierusalem*, where CHRIST had told him, that hee was to suffer: *Matth.* 16. 21, 22, 23. *Master* (sayes hee) *spare thy selfe*: upon which speech CHRIST calls him *Satan*, rebuketh him more sharpely, then at any other time; for which surely there was a more then ordinary cause. Saint *Peter* thought that if his Master should suffer at *Ierusalem*, that himselfe, and the rest should not bee safe: That speech therefore proceeded from feare, and therefore, CHRIST doth immediately thereupon, call for selfe denyall, and taking up the Crosse, *verse* 24. And this was immediately after peace spoken, *verse* 16, 17, 18. CHRIST had never more comfortably, given testimony to Saint *Peter*, and his *faith* then there. Yet againe, after this CHRIST had him up into the Mount, and transfigured himselfe, to harten him against that tryall to come: which made him so confident; yet then he denyed him, at his arraignment; when againe CHRIST immediately upon that, lookt back upon him, with so sweet a looke as broke his heart, for this his folly; and so he returned againe, and it cost him many a teare, and CHRIST after the Resurrection, owned him againe, more then any of the rest, bad them that first met him, *goe tell Peter*. He mentions him by name, and in especiall, *goe tell* him the first newes of it: and then also he asked him, *Peter loveſt thou me?* and he sayd, LORD *thou knoweſt I love thee*: as if he had sayd, though I have played the wretch, yet *I love thee*; upon this, though he

grew

grew more bold; *Acts* 4. 13. yet *Gal.* 2. 11, 12. We finde him, falling into the grudgings of the same disease, which cast him into another fit; hee *dissembled, fearing them of the circumcision*; this was a spice of the former *sinne*, though not so grosse, and though the outward acts in these *sinnes* were diverse, in their occasions, yet they were all acts and buddes of the same root of bitternesse; and may as well bee called, *sinnes* of the same kinde, as the committing differing acts of uncleanesse, are reckoned falling into the same *sinne*.

In the fourth place, if the Scriptures had beene utterly silent in examples, yet reason consonant to other principles, and grounds of Divinity, and of the Scriptures might perswade the same.

1 If he may after the most serious, and through repentance fall againe, into as grievous a sinne of another kinde, and returne: why not into the same againe? I confesse there is some disparity, which might make him more averse, and set him in some more remoteneſse, from the same *sin* he hath particularly repented of, then another; which shall bee considered in its place. Yet, the difference, cannot bee supposed such, as should make the one possible, and not the other; all true repentance working the heart, to an abominating every *sin*, as well as any; seeing if it were true, it was for that particular *sinne, as sinne*; and then it would worke the like against all, and every *sin*, according to the measure of the *sinfulnesse*; and though it may, and doth work a more keen, and special hatred against that

that particular *sinne*, a man hath beene most stung with: yet still, this is but so farre, as this aggravation, (*to fall into the same sinne againe,*) may cause such a relapse, to bee more sinfull then another *sinne*; and so farre, and upon that ground hee is, and may bee more set and strengthened against it, then against another *sin*. But then, if the supposition fall upon another grosse *sin*, never before committed, the sole and single act of which, other circumstances make as heynous, even as this reiterated act of a *sinne* formerly committed, can be; then the one is equally as possible as the other. But however yet still the difference, is but in degrees; as in that, the heart is elongated a degree, or so, further, from that sin formerly committed, then any other: which will not therefore so vary the case, (as *magis & minus* doe not) that it should be made impossible to fall into the one, and not into the other.

Reason 2. 2 Reason: If he may fall into some grosse *sin*, which at first conversion, hee did above all other humble himselfe for; and yee, that an *initiall repentance*, did not put him, into such an impossibility, of falling into that sinne againe: Why then, should a renewed act of repentance, for the same, or for some other reiterated sinne, be supposed to have such vertue in it, as to make him shot-free, for ever, from the same fiery dart againe?

Againe thirdly: Let it bee considered, from whence, it should be, that a renewed, or indeed any act of true repentance, though never so great, and intense, should have such a transcendent, eternall,

and

and invincible virtue in it; and priviledge annexed to it; for how is it, that repentance doth strengthen us against sin? but by restoring the decayed frame of Grace, to a better constitution, and greater degree of strength, then before; and by raising it, above a mans lusts, and aboue that lust, more then all other: as in *David*, when he prayed, *Create in me a cleane heart*, which, through his *sin* of uncleanesse, was in an especiall manner, defiled with a pronenes to that sin. But yet withall remember, that, that new frame of harr, and that strength gotten by that reiterated repentance, and that augmentation, and increase of abominating, and hatred against that sin wrought by it, is all but a creature; as grace, and every new degree of Grace is: and therfore for preserving us, hath, in it selfe, but the power, and force of a created habit, which may bee prevailed against, by the sinne that is in us; and can no more, nay much lesse, put us into a state of confirmation against any particular sin, then the grace of the Angels, could of it selfe confirme them in a state against all sin. And as for the impression, of that bitternesse, which in our repentance was made upon our hearts, for that sinne, fallen into: that also can be supposed to have, but the like force upon our spirits, that the impression of *joy unspeakeable and glorious*, hath upon the heart, in those heavenly raptures, beleevers sometimes enjoy; yea and the latter of these will easily be supposed, to bee of the greater efficacy, of the two; and both but creatures: Now those ravishing joyes, are not yet such immortall, and everlasting

quickning cordialls, that put such spirits into a man, as to preserve him, from sounds, and faintings of spirit for ever: and though, whilst they abide, and are present to the heart, they doe then raise it, above all things here below: yet when a man hath beene awhile off from that Mount, and hath conversed awhile with things here againe below; then that luster weares away, as the glory that shined in *Moses*'s face did; and after awhile, the sense and present taste of those joyes weares out; and when that is gone, that bare remembrance of them, which is left, in their absence, hath not such an infallible, though a great efficacy, to preserve his mind; in an everlasting distrelishing former delights; but that he may, and often doth fall in love againe, too too much with them: although indeed, whilst the present sense of them, did abide upon the heart, it abstracted the minde, from all things here below. And hence, a man is apt, to *fall from his first love*, *Revel.* 2. and, from that high esteeme of spirituall things; as the *Galatians*, *Gal.* 4. 15. *Where is the blessednesse you spake of*, sayes S. *Paul* to them: therefore answerably, the remembrance of the bitternesse of any *sinne*, felt in our deepest humiliations, is much lesse able to preserve a man, nor is the impression and dent made so lasting, nor the scarres and wounds of conscience made, for ever continuing so fresh, as for ever to preserve, and deterre us from falling into the same *sinne* againe. For, both are but creatures, and at best, but arguments drawn from sense, and experience within

within our selves, and have but an human, created power, which is not alwayes efficacious; especially, seeing GOD hath ordained us *to live by faith, more then by sense*, which is appointed by GOD, to bee our more constant keeper, 1 *Pet.* 1.5. *We are kept through faith to salvation*, and by it, more surely, and more constantly, then by impressions of joy, or sorrow which are made to sense: and yet, we are not kept by it, of it selfe, but by *the power of* GOD: so then, we *are kept by the power of* GOD, as the principall supporter, and guardian, *thorow faith* as the instrumental, and by it, rather then by sense, or any other grace, of sorrow or repentance; becaus*e*, *faith* carryes the heart, out of it selfe, and commits it selfe wholly into the hands of GOD, *as a faithfull Creator* (who is the strength of Israel, to keepe a man from every evill worke,) as not being able to secure it selfe, against any *sinne*, thorow the power of any fortification, or strength, that any other grace, or degree of grace hath built, no not for one moment; and therefore, is as dependant upon GOD, after a fall, and a renewed repentance out of it, yea and more, then before he fell: and his owne woefull experience hath reason to make him so. The like instance to illustrate the truth of this, we may draw, from the assurance of *faith* it selfe. For, even the assurance of *faith* it selfe, which is an act properly belonging to that grace, called therefore *the assurance of faith*, *Hebr.* 10.22. and doth strengthen it, as much against doubting, when it is joyned with joy unspeakable,

speakable, and glorious, as repentance can doe against any other *sin*: and whilest it is upon us, in the strength of it, a beleever is apt to think himselfe armed, and strengthened, and so stablisht, as that hee shall never question GODS love any more, or the pardon of his *sins*: and yet, experience shewes it, that the guilt of sin prevailes sometimes againe, after this, and the same doubts arise, and prevaile as much as ever; neither will the remembrance of the former assurance, be alwayes of force enough, to resist them; for, hee may come to question that assurance it selfe also; and so *forget that he was purged from his old sins*. And, if the guilt of *sin*, prevaile in the Conscience againe, against such a renewed, and settled act of *faith*; why may not the power of lust prevaile, in the members, after a renewed act of repentance?

4. If it bee said; that a renewed act, of thorough repentance, doth keepe a man, not by any peculiar vertue in it selfe alone, but, by the power of *God* concurrent with it: Then, I demand, to see the promise, wherein *God* hath infallibly obliged, and engaged his power, to such a renewed act of Repentance, to preserve, from falling into that sinne of all other for ever; without which no man, in faith, can affirme it; and without which, there is an *it may be*, and a supposition of such a possibility, as sometime falleth out, and is reduced to existence; *God* indeed hath said, that *if we fall, he will put under his hand*, to breake that fall, that it shall not ruine us; but not, so to keepe us in his hands, as wee shall be out of danger

ger of falling againe. A renewed act of repentance is, indeed, an ordinance sanctified; to preserve a man; yet, but in the same manner, that other ordinances are; as prayer, and the word preacht, and admonition, *&c.* with which, *God* doth not alwayes, so infallibly cooperate, as efficaciously to worke alwayes that, which they serve to; so nor here.

5 If, there were not such a possibility, as might, and doth sometimes fall out; then every regenerate man, after such a renewed act of repentance, might secure himselfe against that grosse act for ever; but, so, hee can never doe, against any particular act of sinne, but that sinne against the HOLY GHOST. Saint *Paul* therefore exhorts, when his brother is fallen into a sinne, *to restore such an one with the spirit of meeknesse*; upon this consideration, *considering thy selfe, least thou also bee tempted*; and he layes the exhortation, upon those, who are most *spirituall*; *yee that are Spirituall, restore such an one, considering thy selfe, least thou also be tempted, Gala. 6.1.* and so hee speakes of such as have their hearts raised up to the best frame, through the most deepe, and serious repentance: (and now wee may suppose one; that hath formerly fallen himselfe into the same *sinne*, which another is fallen into, but not yet restored: but himselfe is returned by repentance out of it: (for indeed, such a spirituall man, is of all other, like to be the meekest bone-setter of a man fallen,) and even such doth *Saint Paul* exhort to consider, that themselves may, for the

time to come, be also, or in like manner tempted; that is, fal as this man fell; and therfore, *so be tempted* as to fall into the same *sin*, that he was fallne into. And if any man, after the like fall could be secure from the like fall againe, he had beene out of the reach of this exhortation to this duty upon that ground mentioned, as not capable of it. But the HOLY GHOST, hath elsewhere, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. told us, that there is *no tentation that is common to man*, but that is incident, to befal any man, at any time, and therefore, *verse* 12. *exhorts him that standeth, to take heed least he fall*: indeed; that temptation which is common to Divells with men, the *sinne* of finall despaire, and against the Holy Ghost, *&c.* a regenerate man may through the grace of Christ, secure himselfe against: but, all such *sinnes*, as are common to man, from these, or any of them, no man in any state, can without an extrordinary revelation, secure himselfe from the commission of.

Onely I adde these Cautions concerning this case.

1 *Caution.* 1 There are *two* sorts of *corruptions*. First, more grosse corruptions, which the Apostle *Saint Peter* calls, τὰ μιάσματα τῦ κόσμου, the *defilements of the world*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. they being the common mire, or kennell, wherein the uncleane swine of this world wallow, and which the Apostle cals, such *workes of the flesh, as are manifest*, *Gala.* 5. 19. even to the light of Nature; such, as are adultery, fornication, drunkennesse, *&c.* and by those two expressions doth he distinguish them, from a sort of

of more ſpirituall and refined luſts. But ſecondly, there are corruptions more ſpiritual; as pride, ſecret love of the world. Now, for thoſe groſſe corruptions, which are contrary, even to common honeſty, and (to uſe *Iobs* phraſe) *are puniſht by the judges*: 31. *Iob* 11. which prophane men wallow in; a godly man hath more ſtrength againſt them, ſo as it is not ſo ordinary for him to bee entangled againe, and againe with theſe, for where but morrall principles are, theſe are abſtained from; as we ſee in the Phariſee, *I am no adulterer, &c.* therefore, where grace is, much more. And ſome *ſinnes* are more oppoſite to the ſpirit of *holineſſe*, and leſſe competible with Grace, as uncleanneſſe, of which *Saint Paul* ſayes, *God hath not called us to uncleanneſſe, but to holineſſe*, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 7. it is in an eſpeciall manner, there oppoſed to *holineſſe*: and ſuch as theſe, are *workes of the fleſh*, which are *manifeſt*, even to Nature; to civill men: and therefore, when they are often fallen into, they doe manifeſt, that the heart is but fleſh. And, although the limits, how ſeldome, or how often, cannot bee ſet concerning relapſes into theſe, or any ſins; yet, in an ordinary courſe, it may bee ſaid, that few *godly* men fall into ſuch *ſinnes*, againe, and againe: GOD keepes them from ſuch, in an ordinary providence, that ſcandalls ſhould not ariſe; they being *ſinnes*, which all the world take notice of. But thoſe other *ſinnes*, of raſh anger, and love of the world, and ſpirituall pride, *&c.* theſe being leſſe manifeſt, and fitting more cloſe to our ſpi-

rits, godly men are more subject unto.

Yet secondly: concerning these we must againe distinguish.

1 There are the inward listnings to these outward acts: now, though grace weakeneth the very lustings within, yet, takes them not wholly away: *The spirit that is in us*, (that is,) in us Saints, sayes Saint *Iames*, *lusteth to envy*: and as to envy, so to all other *sinnes*.

Yet secondly; the outward grosse acts of such *sinnes*; therein, the weakenesse of *sin* in a regenerate man, and strength of grace shewes it selfe, most in preserving from them: for, as *to will* is *present with mee* sayes *Saint Paul*, *to will what is good, yet how to performe it I am not able*, *Rom.*7.18. So on the contrary, to lust, the heart may be ready; and lust may soone rise up in rebellion; but yet, when it should come to the act, there is a weakenesse discovered; they come to the birth, and want strength often to bring forth; the contrary lusting, and prevailing of grace beeing then seene, and discovering it selfe: that it fareth with a regenerate man in this case often, as with a man, that is deadly wounded, who riseth up to strike his enemy, and thinkes to run him through, but sinkes downe againe, *medio conatu*, when his sword is at his enemies brest, through a deficiency of spirits; or, as a man in a Palsie, or the Gout, who thinkes he is able to walke, till hee comes to try; and then he finds a weakenesse, which makes him fall backe againe: Thus, even when the whole forces of lusts are mustered up; yet the weapons

fall

fall out of their hands. Humours, in a healthfull conſtitution, may ſtirre, and boake in the ſtomacke, when yet, they come not up, nor prevaile unto vomiting. In that place afore named. *Gal.* 5. the Apoſtle ſeemes not to deny, but that in the moſt regenerate, luſtings may ariſe, for *the fleſh* (ſayes he) *luſteth againſt the ſpirit, verſe* 17. but yet, as for outward acts, he tells them, *verſe* 16. *That if they walke in the ſpirit*, that is, in the prevalency of the ſpirit, keeping up a holy frame of heart above the fleſh; that then *ye ſhall not fulfill the luſts of the fleſh*, for that frame of heart, ſo kept up, will hinder the outward fulfilling of the luſt; which is never done, till fleſh and corruption is actually raiſed, above the ſpirit, and gets more voyces to carry it, til the ſpirit be under hatches, and the fleſh above, and ſo ſteeres the helme: otherwiſe, the luſting of the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, will hinder the outward doing, and fulfilling of a luſt. For the reaſon he gives, *verſe* 17. *ſo as you cannot doe what you would*; which implyes, that not onely luſtings, which ariſe without conſent may bee in ſuch a man: but further, much of the will may be wonne, to conſent to them, to like them; when yet, there is not ſtrength enough to carry it on, to the outward act; *you cannot doe what you would.* And what thoſe workes of the fleſh are, which are maniteſt workes of the fleſh, and which Chriſtians, whil'ſt they walke in the Spirit, fulfill not, hee mentions and reckons up, in the following words. And, this is the more ordinary frame of a Chriſtians heart; for *verſe* 24. (ſayes he) *they*

that

that are CHRISTS *have crucified the affections and lusts*, that is, so farre, as not to fulfill them.

3 Hee may more easily fall into a grosse *sin* of another kind, then into the same after speciall repentance for it, and peace spoken in the pardon of it, because true repentance especially fortifies the heart against that *sinne* which a man hath most repented him of, and sincerity lyes more in watching over that *sinne* then any other: so sayes *David*, *Psal.* 18. *I was upright, and kept my selfe from mine iniquity*, that especiall *sinne* which was eminently his *sin*; a mans arme that is broke, will, if well set, rather breake in some other place then where it was broke at the first. Hence sometimes it falls out, that that which was a godly mans bosome sin before conversion, continues not to be so after: but, another steps up in the roome of it; by reason that he endeavoureth then, to wash out that great staine, most; and spendeth the most of the fullers sope, to purge himself from it; and so becomes, ever after, most watchfull over it; and sets in this his weakest place, the strongest garrison, and a watch, to prevent the enemy. And, as an act of some presumptuous *sinne*, though it inclines the heart more to all *sinne*, then before, yet, especially, to commit that kind of *sinne* againe, rather then any other: so on the contrary, is it, in a sound and solemne repentance, for some especiall sinne; and in the endeavouring, to mortifie some especiall member, of the body of *sinne*: (to mortifie which, not onely in the bulke and generall, but also particularly and apart in the severall members

of

of it, the *Holy Ghost* exhorts *Colos.*3.5.) though thereby, the whole habit of the body of *sinne*, is puged, and weakned, yet that particular *sin* which we aime especially to have mortified, is through GODS blessing more subdued then any other. Wee see Idolatry, was the *sinne* which the people of Israel relapsed into, againe and againe; yet when they were once throughly humbled by the Captivity for it, they never returned to it, of all *sinnes* else, not to this day: so as it may be said, as was foretold, happily in an other case. *Eze.*16. 43. *Thou shalt not commit this lewdnesse of all thy abominations: Ionah*, though he would, (happily) never run away from GOD againe, after his goale delivery, out of the *Whales* belly; yet, immediately after peace spoken to his heart he falls into a *sinne* of another kinde; into a passion of extreme anger, and peevishnesse, and quarrelling against GOD; And the reason of this especiall tendernesse to fall into the same *sinne*, is, because the Conscience lookes upon a relapse into that *sinne*, to bee more hanious, then into any other *sinne* of another kind; because of that aggravation of it, wch would staine, and dye it: and although a *sin* of another kind, shewes the variety of corruption more; yet, this is more against the power, and worke of repentance it selfe, which was particularly exercised about that *sin*: and also breakes, and dissolveth all bands of a mans vowes, covenants, prayers, *&c.* made against it in particular; and so is made more grievous. And this, we may see, in *Ez.* humbling himself, for that great *sin* of

of the people, in joyning themselves in marriage with the people of the land; if when hee did set himselfe, to humble himselfe for them, together with those, *that feared God, Chap.* 9.4. What an hideous apprehension of the hainousnesse of that sinne, if they should againe fall into it, did that dayes repentance raise his heart up unto? as appeares *v.* 14. *Should wee againe breake thy commandements, and joyne in affinity with them, wouldst thou not destroy us, till thou hadst consumed us*, and *till there was no escaping?* Into which sinne, yet, the people did againe fall, after they had repented of it, with a solemne confession, and promise of amendment, which is recorded: *Cha.* 10. *v.* 11, 12, *&c.* yet, they returned to it againe, the second time, as we find in *Malachie*, (who lived the last of the Prophets, and after this prayer of *Ezra*:) Now *Mala.* 2.12. the Prophet sayes: *An abomination is committed in Ierusalem, for Iuda hath married the daughter of a strange God:* and then followes the aggravation, *v.* 13. *This yee have done againe*, that is, the second time, and in that respect are challenged to deale treacherously; and that also, in respect, they had repented of it, the first time, *covering the Altar with teares, with weeping, and crying out*, as *Malachie* there speakes to, as *God regardeth not your offerings any more.* And therfore also, *Psal.* 78.40. *How oft did they* (saith he,) aggravating their sins by murmuring provoke the Lord? and *Numb.* 14.22. God reckons up, and mentions the times of their *sinning*, how often they had thus sinned: *They have tempted mee these ten times.*

4. Hee

4. Hee may fall into the ſame ſinne againe and againe, untill hee hath recovered himſelfe, by a thorough repentance, and hath fully recovered his peace; but yet ſeldome after that. *Lot* committed inceſt two nights together; but the orifice of his luſt, was not yet ſtopped by repentance; the wound was not cloſed, and ſo bled againe afreſh; but when it is healed once, and the heart made perfect with GOD, and divorced from that ſinne, and entred into Communion with GOD againe; then though it may fall out; yet a man more hardly returnes. A woman, that is gone from her husband, may play the whore a long while with him ſhee ranne away withall, till her husband fetches her againe: but to runne often away, after receiving againe, is intollerable. That is not ſo ordinary in Gods child. 4 *Caution.*

5. Though wee can hardly ſet limits to ſay when, or when not, this ſhall fall out, from the degrees of mens repentings: as if they have ſuch or ſuch a degree of repentance, they fall no more: yet, we may further conſider a difference of their returnings to GOD, and repentings; and of Gods ſpeaking peace. 5 *Caution.*

1. Of *Repentings*: ſome, are more imperfect, and but, as it were, thawings of the mind a little, by meanes of a little Sunſhine of Gods love: ſome, are more thorow, and deepe; that recover a man, and put him into a ſound, and healthfull eſtate. As for example, a man in an ague, hath well dayes: yet his fits returne, and it may be, they leave him for a month or ſo; and yet, they take him againe,

as

as at Spring and Autumne; which is becauſe, all this while his body is not, thoroughly recovered to a ſtate of health: ſo is it, with a mans heart in reſpect of his luſts; though he may have many well dayes, wherein he may eate his meate, and receive ſweetneſſe in the word, and ordinances: yet at times his diſtempers and aguiſh fits returne, hee being aguiſh ſtill; but, in the end, after the peace of GOD hath more thoroughly eſtabliſhed his heart, he attaines to ſome ſetled, conſtant victory over it; and, when it doth not prevaile to victory, ſuch aguiſh fits end uſually in conſumptions, in which long agues often end: as in Temporaries, in whom, ſin overcomming Gods ſtriving with them, it eates al good beginnings out; but, if they belong to GOD, then uſually that aguiſh diſtemper, is in the end by a more thorough repentance, ſo healed, as that they attaine to more victory, and ſecurity againſt it then any other ſinne; that as in thoſe other kind of tentations, it often fals out, that, that which a man doubted of moſt, he comes in the end to be moſt aſſured of, and to doubt no more; ſo alſo here, a man becomes moſt freed from that ſinne, he was long exerciſed with of all other, ſo alſo.

2. For Gods dealings with his, there is alſo much difference to be found: there are kinds of ſpeaking peace by GOD, and melting the heart of his people, which, yet are not of that force to overcome, but wherein GOD doth but (as it were) ſtrive with them; which ſtrivings, doe ever and anon worke their hearts to a repentance, and

and that true, and serious: which yet is not so deepe, and thorough, nor so healing the heart at the bottome, as it should. For, God sometimes useth more imperfect kind of strivings, even with his owne children, about some particular sinne, they are to leave, which doe not so fully, at first prevaile, and overcome in them; which God doth, to let them see the running issue of their natures, how grace would runne out at it, (as the Apostle speakes) and overcome grace in them, if hee should let it alone: and so, lets out upon his child after many yeares some lust, which had beene long downe, which puts him to it exceedingly, so that hee is in hazzard to bee undone, and put into feares of it, and yet God visiteth his spirit by fits, and *per intervalla* at times strives with him; and though hee fals, yet hee puts under his hand, and gives him well dayes, and some comfortable visitations: yet such as are not deepe enough to worke him fully off from it. For, as God strives with wicked men, so, hee sometimes strives with his owne also; which, may seeme to bee the true meaning of that speech, *Gen. 6.* where, having mentioned the sinne of his owne children, *v. 2.* That the Sonnes of God tooke to them wives of that wicked seed of *Cain*, hee sayes, *My Spirit shall not alwayes strive with man, for that hee also is but flesh:* Hee meanes not this, of all mankind, for hee sayes, *he also* is but flesh: now, with what other creatures, doth he joyne them in this comparison, but with others of the sons of men? so as the meaning is, I see my Children, they also are corrupt. Hebr. 2. 1.

corrupt, and degenerate as well as the reſt of mankinde, and my ſpirit hath ſtriven with them. In which ſtriving, God lets them ſee, how if hee did not in the end, ſhew forth his free love to the full, in the reſcuing of them, and healing their backſliding, they would be undone: ſo as, in the end, through his grace which is ſufficient, they obtaine the greateſt conqueſt, over that luſt of any other; when the heart is once throughly awakened, and ſetled in a thorow peace: and as, thoſe doubts they were moſt troubled with once, (which, though they had at times ſome light, yet by fits did ſtill ariſe,) are yet in the end, ſo overcome, as they ariſe no more, but they enjoy the greateſt freedome from them: So is it often herein. And theſe *ſtrivings to not overcomming*, I reſemble to the thawings of the Ice, in a great froſt, as when in the day time, the Sun ſhines, and in the Sunſhine it thaweth a little: but yet, ſo as at night, or in the ſhade it freezeth; when ſometimes, the weather alſo begins to change for a night, and yet falls a freezing againe: ſo here, there is not ſuch a thorow ſhedding abroad the love of God in the heart, as ſhould make a thorow, generall thaw to the purpoſe as we ſay; and ſo, when that is withdrawne, it freezeth againe: but in the end there comes a more thorow and generall thaw and change that carryes all away, melts the heart, and ſo alters the temper, and conſtitution of the weather, (as I may ſo ſpeake) as it freezeth no more; and ſuch a thawing. Had *David*, when *Nathan* came to him, and not afore; though it may

bee

bee hee had those lesser relentings often before.

But let those that are in such a case, take *heede they be not hardened thorow the deceitfulnesse of sin:* and of all the times, that passe over you, in your lives, these are the most climacteriall, and critical, and most dangerous. For GOD *will not alwayes strive:* if thou beest his child, if such thawings will not doe it, he will use some great afflictions, in the end, to divorce the heart, and thy *sinne:* his love will one way or other, overcome thee; and in the end prevaile. As when *Israel went on stubbornely in the way of his heart,* (sayes GOD *I have seene his wayes, and will heale him and guide him: Esa.* 57. and the LORD may so heale thee, as those Justs, shall not, in that grosse manner, breake forth any more, of all else. And in those times, when God dealeth thus with him: A man will after say, that in such passages of his life, hee had more free love spent on him, in them, then in all his life time before, or after: and, when hee is freed, and healed, he will be more thankefull, and fearefull then ever before, or then otherwise he would have beene, and so get ground by his stumblings. If any of you, being now in such a conflict as this, in such a vicissitude and chance of war: If at present thou findest a constant fight against thy *sinne*; and that those breakings, and meltings of thy heart, by God, doe win ground of it; and that the comforts, and hope, which at times are vouchsafed, doe strengthen, *and stablish thy heart in well doing:* as 2 *Thes.* 2. *ult*; and makes thee more fearefull, every time thou risest, then ever;

so as to looke upon another fit if it should come, (which, knowing the deceitfulnesse of the heart, thou feareſt,) as the fit of some great sickneſſe, leſt it should returne againe; esteeming it as the greateſt crosse that can befall thee; which thou wouldeſt buy off with thy bloud; and bleedeſt moſt of all to thinke, that thou haſt so unconstant a heart, which, as it hath abuſed Gods love formerly, so thou feareſt, will doe so againe; if thus thou goe on to fight it out, the love of God will in the end overcome in thee: but, if thou findeſt, that those encouragements from God, doe thorow thy corruption, (which turnes Gods grace into wantonneſſe) nouriſh thy luſts, and make thee leſſe fearefull, againſt the next time; and thy heart harder, and ſecure; and so ſlight *ſinne* more, becauſe, thou haſt beene so oft viſited from on high, and pardoned: thy caſe is dangerous, and may proove deſperate.

6 Though he may returne, yet not preſently: *Luke* 5. *laſt. Hee that hath taſted old wine, doth not ſtraight way drinke, and deſire new*; not whilſt the love of God, and the taſt, and reliſh of it is freſh in his mouth: when the impreſſion is worne out indeed, and begins to be forgotten, then happily hee may returne.

To conclude with the uſe of this point, if it be folly to runne into the ſame *ſinne*; though wee repent of it afterwards: then, what folly is it in them that utterly fall away? and, after they *have beene enlightned, and taſted of the good word of God*, then fall againe to the pleaſures of *ſinne*, and never repent

pent of them? as many doe, that come, and try a little, what is in religion, and the wayes of God, and then returne againe to their vomits, and never returne to piety againe. *Fooliſh ſoules who hath bewitched you! are yee ſo fooliſh, that, having begun in the ſpirit, yee end in the fleſh?* as *Gal.* 3. 3. *Folly* indeed: to ſpend the harveſt of your time, in ſeeking God, and then to leave him, when you are about to take leave of the pleaſures of *ſinne.* Alas poore ſoules, whither will yee goe? doe you ever thinke to have ſuch a *God* againe? *Thou haſt the words of eternall life,* ſaid the Diſciples to CHRIST: and as *Saul* ſayd to his ſervants, to keepe them from falling away unto *David*; *Can the Sonne of Ieſſe give you vineyards, and make you Captaines of thouſands?* 1 *Sam.* 22. 7. So: can the world give you that peace, that I can give you, may CHRIST ſay to you: yea and heaven beſides hereafter: is the Divell, with all the wages of *ſinne,* you poſt after, able to make you amends? you thereby diſhonour God in returning to *ſinne,* and bring an evill report upon the good land, and diſcredit your maſter, in changing your ſervice; but withall you befoole your ſelves moſt: you *returne to folly.* For even that, which you thinke to gaine, the world's good word, and opinion by, even that you loſe: for, though they make a ſpoile of you, and triumph in ſuch, *and glory in their fleſh awhile:* yet they never inwardly thinke well of ſuch a one; nor truly love him. A back-ſlider, is like luke-warm water; having been once heated,

good men spue out, and evill men regard not: for, what use can indeed be made of it? *like salt that hath lost its savour it is good for nothing but the dunghill*; Like one that hath beene married, but lives divorced; she is undone for her marriage ever after. Such is the condition of those that fall away and repent not: You who have but turned unto folly, and are not grown to a despising and despiting Gods waies, *Returne, oh Shulamite, returne.* And you that have peace and communion with God, take heede you doe not lose him, you will never have such a *God* againe.

BRITISH MUSEUM

FINIS.